

THE PROBLEMS.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

I WAS very much in love with Miss Isadora Curren. I had met her at two balls—had danced with her twice at each, besides helping her to ices and cakes, and now I was making a visit to some friends in the country where Miss Isadora was also a guest—what happiness! what good fortune! Miss Isadora sang, and laughed, and flirted, and I had no eyes or ears for anybody but Miss Isadora. I was very much in love—so everybody said, and so I confessed to myself—and I was not too old not to be very much flattered at the idea of being thought in love with a girl who was so much admired.

One sweet, soft summer afternoon I sat at Miss Isadora's feet gazing into her pretty face, while she cast her eyes by turns on the charming landscape that lay before the window, and upon me. I was very happy. Other guests were sauntering up and down the room, or amusing themselves in various ways—by reading, working, or listening to the music of a fair performer at the piano. It was a pleasant scene—I was thinking about it, and connecting it all in my mind with Miss Isadora. Had she been absent, I was assured that not only I, but every one else would have been wretched, and I contemplated with delight the scene of happiness which the charming Isadora had created. As my eyes wandered round the room observing the various groups, they fell at last on the sweet, thoughtful face of the little daughter of my hostess—a school girl of sixteen. She was sitting alone in the recess of a window with her eyes bent on a volume, on which she seemed vainly striving to fix her attention. In spite of the resolute little frown with which she would turn her eyes on the pages, in a few moments the moving lips would become quiet, and a smile would steal slowly over her countenance as the gay remarks of some of the company fell on her ear. Again and again she turned resolutely to her task, and as often she failed in keeping

her mind to it. It was indeed an impossibility, under the circumstances, but I could not but be amused as I watched her. She did look like such a sweet, innocent, conscientious little thing as she sat there struggling with temptation, that for a little while I almost forgot my beautiful charmer—Miss Isadora. I rose and sauntered toward the little student.

"What is puzzling your head so, Miss Violet?" I said, pausing before her and smiling.

"Ah, Mr. Seldon, it is the forty-eighth problem! If you only knew how hard it is!"

"Geometry?" cried I, "why do people think it worth while to puzzle such charming little heads as yours with such abstruse matters? But let me see if I can help you."

I sat down beside her, and took one side of the book, while Violet's delicate little hand held the other. I had just begun my elucidations, when I heard Miss Isadora's voice calling me—"come, Mr. Seldon, we are going to walk." My first impulse was to drop the book and desert little Violet in the midst of her difficulties—but my better nature prevailed, and I said resolutely—"I cannot come just now, but I will follow you presently."

"Oh, Mr. Seldon, you shall not stay with me," cried Violet, earnestly, "indeed it would distress me. Please leave me, and my dull, old problem, and go with Miss Isadora, or I shall be quite vexed, quite grieved"—and she looked up in my face with pleading eyes. I thought I had never seen eyes of such a deep, heavenly blue, and altogether she looked so very sweet, innocent, and lovely, that I could not feel it a hardship to remain with her, even though separated meanwhile from the divine Isadora.

"No, no," I said, kindly and cheerfully, "I will solve your problem first, and there will be time enough afterward to overtake the party—so now for it."

My pupil was apt, and in a few moments all obscurities were cleared up, and little Violet's face was bright with smiles.

"Thank you—thank you, Mr. Seldon—you have been *very* kind, and I hope it is not too late for you to overtake the walking party."

"Perhaps not," said I, carelessly; "but I want to know first why you were so very anxious about that problem."

"Why?—why don't you know that to-morrow is my last day at school, and that it is examination day? I thought everybody knew that to-morrow was examination day!"

"Not everybody," I replied, smiling, "for I did not know it. But tell me all about it."

"Oh, no, do not ask me—it would take too long; and Miss Isadora——"

"Never mind Miss Isadora," said I, becoming impatient at the frequent repetition of her name; "I find it is now too late to join the walkers, and if you please, I prefer taking a little ramble in the garden with you."

"Oh, delightful! with pleasure!" cried Violet, gaily, and, stepping from the low window, we walked down the shadowy garden walk together. The afternoon was uncommonly lovely, and as the glimpses of sunlight fell on the girlish face of my little companion, I thought I had never seen a being so fresh, innocent, and charming—but I added mentally, "she is nothing compared to the queenly Miss Isadora."

Ere long we heard the voices of the returning party, and with the consciousness of a duty pleasantly performed, I was again at the side of my charmer. I thought she was a little cool toward me at first, but that soon wore off, and I was the happy slave whom she selected to carry her fan, or to seek her forgotten gloves or handkerchief. I appreciated her condescension, and was, as of course I should have been, supremely blest. In the evening Miss Isadora sang, and sang the songs that I preferred. All radiant with smiles and jewels as she was she deigned to lean on my arm—to dance with me—to eat the ices I presented—to endure my adoring glances, and never was mortal more flattered and bewitched than I. That night, after going to bed, I rose, and for Miss Isadora's sake spoiled half a quire of good paper.

It was not till the next day, when little Violet returned smiling and happy from school, with a silver medal round her neck, that I again thought of her.

"So, Miss Violet, you have passed examination creditably, I see," said I, pointing to the medal.

"Ah, yes," she replied, blushing, and holding it up that I might see the word "Problem" engraved on it—"and I know whom to thank for it. Indeed, Mr. Seldon, I think this medal

belongs rather to you, than to me, but for you, I am sure, I should not have had it."

"Do you think so? Well then give it me!"

Smiling she took it from her neck and handed it to me, saying—"I am sure you will not take it—you would not care for such a thing."

"Yes, but I shall, if you will yourself place it round my neck."

Violet hesitated and blushed, but did as I desired, and then turned hastily away. She looked so shy—so modest, and so innocent, that I was irresistibly charmed! I followed her down the garden walk.

"Is not this white rose beautiful, Miss Violet?" I said, gathering a half opened bud.

"Ah, yes, most beautiful," she replied, turning to look at it.

"Forgive me, Miss Violet," I continued, "but to me it looks like you—may I put it in your hair?"

"No, you would be too awkward," she replied, smiling; "I will do so myself."

She took the rose and placed it in her hair in so graceful a fashion, and so greatly did it set off her beauty, that I could not withdraw my eyes from her, and Bryant's exquisite lines rose to my mind—

"Innocent maid and snow white flower,
Well are ye paired in your opening hour,
Thus should the pure and lovely meet,
Stainless with stainless, and sweet with sweet."

So several weeks flew by, and had I not known that I was incontrovertably in love with Miss Isadora, I should almost have fancied that I was losing my heart to little Violet, so rapidly did she win upon me. I would not admit myself to have been so fickle as to have changed, but I could not deny that Miss Isadora bewitched and fascinated me, my heart was most full of tenderness when I thought of sweet little Violet. It was a problem which I could not solve, which of these two charming beings I was most in love with—and but that such a thing has been declared impossible by all persons skilled in such affairs, I should have cut the matter short by believing myself in love with both.

While in this undecided state of mind, events began to take a turn which soon let me see a little further into my own heart, and left me in no doubts as to my feelings. A young gentleman, Mr. C——, also a guest at the house, suddenly began to pay assiduous attentions to Violet. I was indignant—I felt as if personally insulted in the most flagrant manner—my blood boiled whenever the man presumed so much as to speak to "my little Violet," or to look in her innocent face. I wondered she should permit it—but she, poor child, seemed quite unaware of the

dangerous nature of this man. I longed to put her on her guard, and one day made up my mind to do so, in the course of the afternoon walk. I was preparing to accompany her, when I saw that Mr C—— was already by her side. I was in a horrible humor, and though Miss Isadora said with her sweetest smile,

"Come, Mr. Seldon, you shall be my escort." I excused myself, and would not walk at all. I went and sat alone in my room, indulging my jealous fancies—yes, I was jealous—I could no longer deny it. I had made that discovery, and before that *another*, which was, that little Violet was dearer to me than life itself. Miss Isadora, with all her brilliancy, had faded from my heart—all her charms and graces seemed worthless, compared with one innocent, child-like smile of sweet little Violet's—and she—she was now, perhaps, lost to me forever. I was wretched. After a time I heard gay voices below, and presently a voice singing. It was one I did not know, but very clear and sweet; its tones were full of freshness, purity and feeling, and, as though drawn by a magnet, I stole nearer and nearer to the enchanting sounds. I entered the drawing-room just as the voice ceased, and Violet rose blushing from the piano. "Charming! delightful! what a shame you have never sung before!" rounded from all sides, and one of the ladies explained to me—"Mr. C—— has at last prevailed on Violet to sing—I am sure we ought to be much obliged to him for using his influence to such advantage."

I bit my lip, and glanced toward Violet. Mr. C—— was bending over and whispering to her—her eyes were cast down, and a blush was on her cheek. It was a sight that was hateful to me, but as if fascinated I stood, and could not withdraw my gaze. Violet—*my* Violet listening to the flatteries of another! I saw her rise to dance with Mr. C——, and I could endure it no longer; in a passion of jealousy I hurried from the room. I found my way to the library, and mechanically

took up a book. It was Violet's geometry, and it opened to the forty-eighth problem. I sat at the table with it open before me, my eyes fixed upon it, while my thoughts wandered back to that first sunny afternoon, when I sat by Violet's side, so unconscious that she would soon be to me the being most dear on earth—the one to whose hands was committed my weal or woe. I took Violet's little medal, which I still wore, from my neck, and laid it on the book, and gazed in a reverie on the word "Problems." The door opened, and Violet hastily entered. Coming behind me she looked over my shoulder, exclaiming,

"What! more problems?"

"Yes, Miss Violet," I answered, sadly, "but *now* they are too hard for me to solve."

"Indeed? then it is my turn to help *you*, as you once helped me," she exclaimed, laughing. "Pray tell me if I can help you."

"Ah, if you only would!" I replied, looking up searchingly and earnestly into her face.

She was silent, and cast down her eyes. Something in her blushing face and shrinking manner encouraged me.

"Yes, Violet," I said, hurriedly, "there is indeed a problem that perplexes me, and which you alone can solve. I hardly dare to ask you, for it seems impossible that you should—but do you think you could ever—in time, I mean—learn to love me? or," I added, with a burst of grief and tenderness, "must I give my little Violet up to another?"

Tears came into Violet's eyes, and she trembled.

"What you ask is impossible," she began, and paused. In bitterness of heart I bowed my head upon the table, that she might not see my agony. "Because," she added, laying her hand on my shoulder—"because I cannot *learn* to love you, when I already do so with all my heart and soul! Yes," she added, smiling through her tears at my bewilderment, "*that* lesson I began to learn with our first Problem."

WAS HE RIGHT?

BY REV. H. HASTINGS WELD.

In a recent number of "The Ladies' National Magazine" I contributed a sketch, entitled "Was She Right?" which has elicited the following story of a somewhat parallel case. The sketch is also from the life; and by a lady. I give it in her words.

The gallantry of men—or I am sometimes inclined to suspect, their reserve or insincerity when the conduct of woman is in the question, induces them to treat the sex with anything but impartial justice. They praise us at the expense of themselves, and fill the heads of the young and giddy with impossible notions of woman's prerogative, and woman's rights; woman's virtue, and her constancy—that is to say, on paper. Who, for instance, ever read of an inebriate, in a temperance tale, who had not a wife of perfect character? In real life, it is true men often exhibit more selfishness, and quite a capacity for taking care of themselves and their own interests. They educate us to think ourselves angels, or at least to imagine that they think us such; and when the trial comes, and something of consequence is at issue, our angelic attributes are all forgotten, and they disappoint us most cruelly.

But I must cease writing a preface, and come to the point; for prefacing only leads me further from my purpose. Your correspondent says that common sense views of duty in matters of love and matrimony are the true ones. I am about to tell the story of a young man who followed the dictates of sound reason.

Mabel Stanley was amiable, engaging and beautiful. Her auburn hair and gentle eyes—her fair, broad forehead and clear skin, were in such harmony with her kind manners, that she seemed more a mild vision than a human being of actual flesh and blood. Perhaps my description does not convey the readers beau ideal of beauty; but as I am describing a person who really lived, and no mere ideal, I shall be pardoned if I adhere to the truth. There were indeed those who would not concede her claims to strict beauty. Even such, however, admitted that without the right to be pronounced beautiful, she was "charming." And if such be the general effect of a person's presence, certainly we need not go into an analysis of lips and eyes and brows. So that the *tout ensemble* pleases,

the strict requirements of classic elegance may be overlooked.

Mabel was often in little difficulties; but then it was a pleasure to forgive her. Her disconsolate air was so very pitiful that you could hardly pardon yourself for having blamed her and caused her tears; and when you had repaired all by a kiss, and the assurance of reconciliation, the sunlight which came over her face was as delightful as the cheerful sky after a summer afternoon shower. There was a reason, and generally the same reason for all her dilemmas; but if I tell it now, it will spoil my story.

We were of the same age, and left school together. Of course we promised a life long friendship; and what is most remarkable, boarding-school Misses as we were, we kept our faith. And thus it happens, that although we lived many miles apart, I am so well acquainted with every passage of her life. It seems to me now almost a troubled dream as I look back upon it; and but that it is so fruitful in admonition, I would not disturb the past.

At first we were frequent correspondents—so frequent that my father good humoredly declared that I was a much better daughter of the republic than daughter of his, inasmuch as I impoverished him to enrich the post-office treasury. Still he was as fond as a child, of hearing portions of Mabel's letters, and very much admired the air of charming romance which she could throw over the most common-place themes. Her descriptions and narratives were delightful, and he said if he were only young again he could fall in love with her by post, marry her by proxy, send for her home, and cherish her, without one preliminary look at her face and form. Any face and any form must be engaging, animated by such a mind as Mabel's.

You may be sure I was delighted that my father was so much pleased with my friend's letters. After a year or two of correspondence the epistles grew less frequent. I might have regretted this more, only that as they became fewer in number they increased in interest; and this interest was not a little enhanced by a spice of mystery. Mabel was "engaged;" and from the earliest steps in the affair she made me her confidant. She gave me the minute history of all her emotions, and all his advances, from

the hour of her first suspicion of his attentions, until she became really and formally *fiancee*. As through this interesting period I was charged to secrecy, and as there was scarce a line in her communications which was not tinged with some allusion, direct or remote to the one thought of her heart, my father maliciously declared that Mabel must be in love, and rallied me upon my fidelity, while "he warranted there was not a person of her acquaintance who had not the same confidence as I." I could only smile evasively; for it was part of my education never to tell a falsehood, even in jest.

At length the injunction was removed, and I told my father that "Mabel was engaged." And I confessed, moreover, much to his glee, that she had some time since apprised me of the turn affairs were taking. "I knew it!" he said. "And now I *must* see this couple. Write to Mabel to spend a month with us, for of course you will be her bridesmaid. Let him accompany her here, and leave her with us."

This proposall fell in too completely with my desires not to be immediately communicated to Mabel, and father actually added a postscript to a young lady whom he had never seen, insisting in the most mandatory terms, on Mabel's accepting the invitation. Our joint request was complied with; and an early answer was received from Mabel, designating the day on which we might expect her.

I never shall forget my flutter of expectation as the time drew near. I was so anxious to see Mabel's choice! I painted him mentally, from her description—and dwelt, much to my father's amusement on his perfections of form and face; on the rich stores of his mind, and the charms of his conversation and accomplishments. Papa was so provokingly incredulous, with his wise proverbs about seeing through lover's eyes, and hearing through charmed ears, that I was quite vexed with him, and determined to like Mr. Milman, if out of sheer opposition only. They came. The man was certainly well enough. And better than that—though I have never quite forgiven him—I must own that he was conscientious and upright—a very Spartan. Perhaps he had too much unbending integrity for this shuffling world. But his error, if it were one, was on the right side.

I may say I was not disappointed in him; but I must confess I did not find Mabel what I had pictured her. And I caught myself absent and wondering, on the very evening of her arrival, whether it were possible that I could have changed so much in three years, as I saw she had. I had, girlish as I was, arranged a most ardent embrace in my mind, but when she was handed out of the coach by a stout, fine-looking man with great whiskers, I could not throw myself into her arms.

Our meeting was refined into the most polite of well-bred kisses, and I showed the bride elect to her chamber with awful deference, leaving papa to do the honors to the bridegroom. The girl had grown—gracious me! But all her growth of person was nothing to the *je ne sais quoi* which had come over her—the womanly development I suppose it must have been—the conscious but unconscious consequence of a young woman really engaged, and actually to be married in the spring. This meeting was in early autumn.

Well—Mr. Milman went in the morning, leaving Mabel in our charge. His departure seemed to relieve us from a cloud. Mabel relapsed into the pleasant, artless school girl of yore, and her laugh rang out again. I wondered if Milman did not like laughter, and that, therefore, it was that she had been so constrained before him. But my better sense suggested that marriage is really a very serious affair, and that one cannot at once become so accustomed to the thoughts of it, as to feel quite at ease, before an old friend, at the first meeting under such circumstances. Milman came again and again during the six weeks that Mabel remained with us, and we all grew at last to feel quite at our ease with him. Still I observed that Mabel was not the same person when her affianced was with us that she seemed when he was away; and papa, who is sometimes quite in haste with his likes and his dislikes, conceived quite a prejudice against Mr. Milman on that very account. He thought that he had an undue, and quite a tyrannical influence over his intended, and argued thence that they never could be happy together. For my own part I was troubled; and I can confess now, that it was more through fear of her deficiency than for any fault which I detected or suspected in him. One day I was an accidental listener to a sentence or two which passed between them—no more. I heard not what preceded or what followed; but the words, almost unmeaning in themselves, had to me a dreadful weight, for they brought up reminiscences which I would gladly have forgotten. He said in a tone of grave vexation, "why, my dear Mabel, I thought you told me thus and thus, when I was here before." "Oh, no," she answered, "you must be mistaken." "But, now I think of it, Mabel, I am *sure*." "Then you must have misunderstood me." They passed out of hearing, and I went to my chamber oppressed—and with these simple words. For they were a key to many earnest colloques which I had before partly perceived, and now constantly observed. They explained to me all her constraint, and all his distrust. I feared for her. I longed to talk affectionately and earnestly with her. I once ventured to ask, "have you had no lovers quarrels?" "Not the semblance of one," she answered.

"Not a word of difference?" She looked me full in the face—but she did color, as she answered, "no, not a word!" Shall I own it? I did not believe her.

When Mabel left us, at the end of her six week's visit, all was sunshine. Everything was definitely arranged for the following spring when the nuptials were to take place. Mabel had never before looked to me so beautiful—full of hope and happiness, and Milman had succeeded at last, in establishing himself completely in our good graces. His fine manly form and commanding presence compelled our respect, and I could but acknowledge that Mabel needed a director and guide in her husband. My father now pronounced him a young man of great promise, with a character matured beyond his years, and natural talents, and acquired knowledge which could not fail to give him an enviable position. I rejoiced for Mabel that she had been so happy as to obtain the preference, and win the affection of a man whose love would do any woman honor.

Through the winter which followed, Mabel and Milman were frequently the subject of our conversation, and as for me, they were constantly in my thoughts. It occurs to me here to state a fact—of no consequence to be sure to the story—my mother had been long since dead. I mention it only to explain why my father is so often spoken of, and she never. My dear father! He has been many years too, in the silent land, but the teachings of his advice and of his example, his exact and excellent principles have left an influence which I trust will never leave me, and which I hope, moreover, will be perpetuated to my children! I do wish you gentlemen who have the direction of the public press, and the ladies who are your correspondents—aye, and even the clergy who speak under a higher warrant—I do wish, I say, that you would talk to fathers about their duty to their daughters? Tell them to make companions of them—to develop their minds by knowledge—such knowledge as books do not contain—such as even mothers cannot well impart. Let them be brought forward by the masculine strength of a father's mind, and teach them that "accomplishments" are only the gilding of a character. I know that fathers are always more indulgent to their daughters than their sons; but *indulgence* is not *education*. Nor is it education to pay large bills without a murmur, or to heap expense upon paid teachers. An hour of the father's time were worth a day of that of any paid instructor; the encouragement of a father's judicious care is all important; even if it were only to dissipate the impression that while sons are always welcome, daughters are pitied, petted and tolerated.

We had ceased counting months and weeks, and commenced counting the days that intervened before our visit to H—, to be present at Mabel's marriage, when, one morning father brought from the office a letter which caused me much anxiety, and father many ejaculations upon the fickleness of lovers. It was a long, long, letter, in a forced style of composition upon indifferent subjects chiefly; but the pith of the communication was that "they," meaning Mabel and Milman, had decided to "postpone" their wedding for a few weeks, or months. No reason was given for this, and no clue to any, though the three sides of letter post which were covered with close penmanship showed that whatever was the cause of this reserve, it was not want of time. You lady readers will understand that this late notice of a change of purpose had permitted me to take a great deal of unnecessary trouble, and had imposed upon my father some expense which might have been spared. However, we had nothing to do, but to wait. I suspended my personal preparations with a feeling of presentiment. But papa only laughed at this, and urged me to have all ready, and my trunks packed, for he said, we should be summoned away at a short notice. Men never will learn that ladies toilet cannot be kept "packed." It is destruction to them.

Weeks passed, and months even, and we heard not a word from Mabel. I wrote and received an answer, but as in my letter I carefully avoided all allusion to the postponed marriage, so in hers the subject was not referred to even in the most distant manner. I had foreborne to speak of it, not knowing what to say, or how to inquire—but her silence was inexplicable. "Now," said my father, "you may unpack your trunk. The match is broken off." I thought so too.

Gradually all correspondence ceased between us. I wrote the last letter, and as it remained unanswered, there was no course for me to take but to forbear writing to one who, by her silence, evinced a disinclination to hear from me. Months passed thus, and my first feeling of half anger had subsided into deep and doubting regrets. I was on the point of writing again, and waiving the point of pride and etiquette, to beseech her to tell me something respecting herself, when I received a letter. It was very brief, and I did not at first recognize the hand, but turned to the signature to ascertain if this could be Mabel's writing. She said, "I have been very sick—oh, I don't know how long, and this is the first time I have taken a pen in my hand. The doctor says I may write you a few lines, if I will ask you to come and spend a few weeks with me, for he says I need a change of persons and associations to rally my forces. Do ask your good papa to spare his housekeeper for a short

time, and come on such an errand of charity and friendship."

I need hardly say that I complied with all possible expedition with this request. I pass over the incidents of the journey; though they would seem almost a romance to the present generation of rail-road travellers—for travelling in those days had incidents, if only in the study of stage advertisements, and the watching of baggage in the various changes. I reached H— after a weary ride, and was safely landed at the house of the uncle with whom Mabel resided; for she, poor child, was an orphan. I felt how ill she must have been, and still probably was, when I was told that I must wait until the morning to see her, as she must first be prepared for my arrival.

What a night of anxiety and suspense was that! On the morrow I was up with the sun, and looked abroad on a landscape glorious in its autumn beauty. It reminded me of the mornings in which Mabel and I had rejoiced the year before, and I wept at the contrast which her present state presented. From the window I turned to the table, and saw the little evidences of Mabel's hand in the furnishing of this, the guest chamber. A Bible lay there, my father's gift, in which he had half pleasantly, half seriously told her, she must keep her family record. I strove in vain to fasten my thoughts on its pages, and leaving my apartment, descended to the lawn.

At breakfast I met only Mabel's aunt. The husband had been called away by some business appointment. I did not regret this; for I hoped that the lady would give me some clue to the cause and nature of Mabel's illness. And so she did. I need not repeat her precise words. The substance of her communication was that Milman broke his faith with Mabel, and deserted her—without so much as assigning a reason. Mabel never would say what was the difficulty, and she was sure she could not imagine. She knew, however, that the Milmans must be disagreeable people, for Mabel had some trouble with his mother and sisters, before he disagreed with her. She bore up, poor girl, wonderfully, and would not acknowledge how much the affair had distressed her; but it was that which had made her ill, and nothing else. There was much more, but this was the purport; and I need hardly say that much as I desired to hear, I did not commit myself by asking any questions.

In a few hours I was admitted to Mabel's room. There was a change indeed! I could hardly conceive it possible that in a few months my friend could have become so wan and wasted—her cheeks so pale, her fingers so transparent. She was propped in a chair with pillows, and smiled gladly but faintly as she took my hand. I seated

myself beside her—she dropped her head upon my breast and sobbed audibly for some moments. Not a word had been said, but I was greatly constrained by the nurse to leave the room, and Mabel was placed again on her couch.

A day or two passed, before I was again admitted to the invalid's chamber. Now she was more composed, and I spent a little time with her in cheerful conversation. On the next day I quietly took my place at her bedside, without formality, the doctor only stipulating that we should not talk too much. And in a few weeks I had the happiness to find her decidedly convalescent, and out of danger. It may seem surprising to the reader, but never, in all this time did the name of Milman, or any reference to him pass our lips. I returned to my father, and left the once blooming Mabel restored to something like her former health and beauty. She was indeed a beauty still; more ethereal, and more, I suppose, to the fancy of the other sex; for never was lady put to the task of declining more overtures than Mabel Stanley was when she recovered her health, though she never quite regained her former bloom. She died a few years since at a respectable age—what age I will not say since it would be a revelation of my own, and all witnesses are excused from betraying themselves. And since I flatter myself that the reader has some interest for her, and sympathy with her, I will state that her last years were cheerful and comfortable; that she was notable for doing good; and took rank with those excellent women, who, having been "disappointed" themselves, spend a life-time in serving others, and making the circle in which they move happy by a thousand little kindnesses and many sensible benefits. In a word, Mabel Stanley lived and died a kind "old maid."

And now comes the question, "Was He Right?" I will not say how I obtained the knowledge, but I can state the reason of her separation from Milman. In her youth, from timidity, carelessness, a presumption on a pretty presence, or all these causes combined, Mabel Stanley had too slight a regard for strict truth. Milman noticed these little divergences, as the reader will now remember. He tried not to perceive—then to overlook—then to excuse them. At last by a little chain of events, which are not worth raking from oblivion, she seriously embroiled poor Milman with his own mother and sisters. A little falsehood led to great consequences; not the least afflicting of which was, that poor Mabel, beautiful Mabel, stood before him in all the deformity of an absolute falsifier!

What could the man do? She dismissed him in a fit of half bravado, and he took her at her word. Any overture at reconciliation would have

been at once met by her. She would even have confessed her fault, and made her old school days reparation, by a passion of tears, and a beautiful look of humiliation. Milman's friends—his own mother entreated him not to sacrifice her to that little difficulty—and not to make himself unhappy to avenge their difference. But he thought she had sacrificed herself, and that he could not be more miserable than with a wife whose word he could not confide in. He left H—, and never returned there to reside. He never accounted to the world for his conduct, but magnanimously bore the reproach of fickleness to spare her name. Now, again we ask, "Was He Right?"

He did not even sentence himself to celibacy.

He lost the romance, and perhaps saved himself some of the follies of early marriage, but at a ripe age, when "the story of his love" had passed into forgetfulness he married a woman every way worthy of him. Even Mabel Stanley heard of the match without visible emotion. Nay, they sometimes met, and the observer who knew nothing of their past history, would think of nothing in their style of addressing each other, except that being slightly acquainted, they were formally polite. Those who knew could better solve the riddle.

Was He Right? My father always maintained that he was—and I believe him against the world in a matter of conscience.

ALICE VERNON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "DORA ATHERTON," &C.

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An! what a September afternoon.

How gaily the little red squirrels chased each other over the ground and along the fences. How longingly they looked up at the spicy walnut and hickory boles, and at the green burrs of the chesnut, around which a faint tinge of brown was already creeping.

How gloriously the sunshine came through the tall woods, giving a look of humanity to the grim old trees.

How beautifully the gorgeous Golden Rod and rich Purple Mist grew, side by side, embroidering the edges of the silvery stream, and fringing the skirts of the dark green forest. What soothing music the waters made as they gurgled over the rounded stones: and how like a strain of sweet harmony the dropping leaves and soft south wind came in and mingled with it.

Mr. Vernon and his two daughters sauntered on, as only those will saunter whose business is pleasure: stopping here to take up an empty bird's-nest and study it with idle intensity, or there to separate the fallen leaves with a foot, to look for a last year's nut.

The younger of the girls was lingering behind, breaking the grey moss from the trunk of a tree, when a loud crashing was heard in a neighboring thicket, as if some wild beast had broken loose from its keeper. She started, screamed, and then stood still, her eyes fixed in terror in the direction of the hidden noise.

At the moment, a huge Newfoundland dog dashed forward, panting and dripping as if from some aquatic excursion. His white and brown coat was matted and curled with the water; the large pink tongue was lolling out of the mouth; the breath came thick and fast; and the big brown eyes gazed up at you, like those of an intelligent, but boisterous child in its play.

"Down, Neptune—down, sir," cried a commanding voice: and, at the moment, a gentleman emerged from the thicket, just as Mr. Vernon and Isabel, who had turned back at Alice's shriek, came up.

The stranger took off his cap, and bowing to the ladies, addressed Mr. Vernon.

"I regret much, sir," he said, "that my dog should have alarmed your daughter. I fear, too,

that I am on private grounds. My only apology is the majesty of these old woods."

So rich and deep was the voice, and so evidently well-bred was the speaker, that Mr. Vernon and his daughters looked at him in some surprise. For, in truth, his slouched travelling-cap, loose blouse and dusty garments, together with a well-worn port-folio which he carried under his arm had, at first, led them to expect only some travelling portrait-painter.

He was about five and twenty years old, with a tall, lithe figure: and his well-set head, the dark hair curling around the open brow, and the finely chiseled profile, formed a *tout ensemble* that impressed the beholder instinctively with the idea of genius.

It was with marked respect, therefore, that Mr. Vernon answered,

"My daughter's health is delicate, and she is rather nervous," said he. "But she must learn," and he glanced proudly, yet archly at her, "to become accustomed to surprises, for the woods, though belonging to my place, are open to all. A remarkably fine animal, that of yours: you should be proud of such a dog."

The stranger's eye rested with admiration on the fine figure of Mr. Vernon, as the latter spoke. The tall, soldier-like form was unbent by trouble, and seemed untouched by age; the eye was kind, almost loving in its expression; but the mouth and jaw were firmly set, and unyielding even to obstinacy. The "crowning dignity" was the thick, white hair over the broad brow.

"Yes," replied the stranger, turning to the dog with the look of an old friend, "and I have reason to be proud of him, for he saved my life once."

"Ah," said Mr. Vernon; and his face expressed well-bred curiosity.

"I sometimes think," continued the stranger, with a smile, "that animals understand language. Here is Neptune now looking up at me as if he knew every word I said. Is it not so, old friend?" and he stooped and patted the dog. And then noticing that the eyes of Mr. Vernon and his daughters were still directed inquiringly on him, he told how, when, swimming, he had once been seized with the cramp; how no human being was

in sight; and how he had given himself up for lost, when suddenly Neptune, hearing his voice, plunged into the water, hastened to his assistance, and assisted him to the shore. The tale was told simply, yet eloquently, and when the narrator, at its close, glanced toward the ladies, he saw the liquid eyes of the younger full of tears.

Both Mr. Vernon and Isabel had seated themselves, when the stranger began; but Alice, child-like, had slid down at the foot of a tree, where she reclined half leaning against the trunk. A stray sunbeam, breaking through the foliage, poured a shower of liquid gold around her, bringing out her graceful, undulating figure, and playing on the little foot that peeped from beneath her rumpled dress. Her right arm, carelessly supporting her head, around which the brown hair was circled in a heavy roll, Madonna-wise, threw one snowy shoulder out into the light. The fair and lovely face was turned toward the speaker, its large, soft eyes, unconsciously humid; and its small mouth tremulous with pity. "She is one to love and treasure forever," thought the young man; and his look, perhaps, revealed this; for Alice, catching his earnest gaze, blushed over cheek and neck, and with sudden embarrassment, sat upright and began to rearrange her dress.

"You sketch, I suppose," said Mr. Vernon, after a pause, glancing at the stranger's portfolio.

"A little," was the reply. "I have always loved nature, and been fond of art. I have heretofore sketched for amusement, but must now do it for a livelihood."

"You are not, I think, a resident of this neighborhood."

"No, I am from ———. My father was the late Judge Randolph."

"Ah! I knew him well. But that was many years ago. I count it a fortunate chance," he added, blandly, "which has introduced me to his son."

"Pray," said Isabel, speaking now for the first time, "will you allow us to look over your portfolio? I am extravagantly fond of painting."

The two girls sat down together to the sketches. What a contrast to the pure young face of Alice was that of her sister! The heavy black hair; the dark cheek; the calm, cold eye; the scornful mouth—how self-supporting they seemed. Isabel was not over twenty-five years of age, but her face wore the satiated look of one who had weighed all pleasures in the balance and found them alike wanting. If passions she ever had, they seemed to have worn themselves out.

The elder sister looked over the drawings with the eyes of an appreciative critic: the younger,

with a rising color and brightening eye, as some favorite nook was recognized.

"Have you ever been in Europe, Mr. Randolph?" said Mr. Vernon.

"Yes, sir," he said. "Thank heaven, that is a pleasure I have not missed."

The Vernons had spent two or three years abroad: and now, in the dim old American woods, with the green trees swaying above them, and the autumn sunset about them, what pictures were recalled of the shrouded Alps, the golden rivers of Spain, the rose-tinted sunsets of Italy, and the wondrous purple atmosphere and thyme-clad hills of Greece.

How the time sped! How little Alice said, but how she trembled, even now, with ecstasy at the memory of those beautiful things of nature! And as the eyes of Randolph, as they looked over the sketch-book, together, often met hers, he felt that his soul and hers thrilled with sympathy.

The acquaintance begun on this day soon ripened into intimacy. At Mr. Vernon's request, George Randolph accompanied the ladies home, and it was not long before he became like one of the family. Not a day passed without his dining at Vernon Hall. The mornings were generally given to walking or riding with the ladies; and the evenings were spent over music, or in conversation, with now and then a moonlight walk.

Occasionally Randolph, feeling ashamed of this idle life, was seized with a fit of industry; took his sketch-book; and resolutely spent a morning in professional labor. But when he next made his appearance at the Hall, he was sure to be rallied by Isabel on his want of gallantry. At such times, Alice, to whom he always turned, said nothing, but her mild, half reproachful look, was more potent than all her sister's words.

It was not often, indeed, that Alice spoke at all. She seemed too diffident to join in general conversation; but sat listening, usually occupied with some pretty piece of needlework, her long lashes resting on her cheek, and rarely looking up except when Randolph addressed her. Occasionally, however, when he was in the midst of some eloquent sentence—and no man could talk more eloquently than George Randolph—she would gaze at him, as if spell bound. Once he turned suddenly, for he had been addressing her sister, and detected those earnest eyes drinking in his words. Instantly the long lashes fell upon the cheek, which became crimson: and for the next half hour, Alice neither looked up, nor spoke.

Had Alice desired, she could scarcely have played a principal part in the conversation, for Isabel, as the elder sister, seeming to consider that on her rested the task of entertaining their guest, monopolized Randolph herself. To do

Miss Vernon justice few, even of her own sex, could talk as brilliantly. Her intellect was vivacious, and her mind well stored. She possessed tact also in an uncommon degree. Whatever subject was started, she took the direction of the conversation speedily into her own hands; and by her judicious management of it completely engrossed the attention, if not the heart of Randolph.

Her guest would have been better pleased, had it been otherwise. It was Alice, not Isabel, that drew Randolph, day after day, to Vernon Hall. The sweet, retiring modesty of the younger sister was infinitely more lovely in his eyes, than the brilliant wit and thorough bred self-possession of the elder. He compared the one, in his secret reveries, to the meek violet, and the other to the flaunting rose; and the violet was a thousand times the dearer.

At times, however, when her spirit was deeply moved, Alice broke through her usual coyness. An instance of this happened about a fortnight after Randolph's introduction at the Hall.

It was a beautiful moonlight evening, and the sisters, with their guest, had stepped out into the piazza. The Hall stood on a gentle elevation, which sloped down, over a grassy lawn, to a small lake, about a hundred yards distant: and the opposite side of this sheet of water was overhung by a thick wood. The moon was just rising over the top of the dark trees, so that the front of the wood was buried in shadow; but a bridge of silver spanned the gulf, and the hither shore was flooded in light.

"How beautiful," exclaimed Isabel, as this fairy-like scene burst upon them.

Randolph turned to Alice, but she was silent. Was it insensibility? No, for her kindling eye and heightened color showed that her emotion was too deep for words? And yet, with all the rapture of that gaze, there was something melancholy in it.

Randolph, after a pause, drew nearer to her: and his low voice, as he spoke, unlocked her heart.

"You seem sad," he said.

She looked up at him. His eyes, full of infinite sympathy, melted her spirit, as it were, into his own; and, yielding to the sweet mastery, she spoke, thinking aloud.

"A moonlight landscape always makes me mournful: it seems so cold and unsympathizing. Ah! how one's spirit, on a night like this, goes longingly up to heaven! I feel as if I should like to die on a moonlight night, earth is so chill and unsatisfying then."

"Positively, my little sister is growing poetical," said Isabel, with a gay laugh, approaching the two.

The spell was broken. Randolph felt as if discord had suddenly dashed the harmony of the spheres. Alice drew back abashed, and was silent for the rest of the evening.

Randolph, dissembling his chagrin, yielded himself up politely to Isabel's lead in conversation, and was soon rattling away as if nothing had occurred. Ah! how Alice suffered. "He despises me," thought she, shrinking back into the shadow of a vine, and gazing out on the lake with dim eyes. "How foolish I must have appeared to him going off into such a rhapsody. And Isabel is so talented."

If Alice was miserable, Isabel was happy. Ever since their first meeting, she had admired Randolph, and, within the last few days, this feeling had been deepening into love. Hence one reason why she monopolized his conversation. She knew she had talents, and she resolved to dazzle Randolph: hers he should be, she secretly vowed, if beauty and brilliancy could win him. It was the first time Isabel had ever loved. But love, instead of abashing her, as it did Alice, only stimulated her to a greater exertion of her powers.

Once or twice, when she had seen Randolph regarding her sister, a suspicion had shot across her heart that he loved Alice. There was something in his look, at such times, which she had never observed directed on herself, and which she felt instinctively would have made her soul thrill to its profoundest depths. Such a meaning had been in his eyes, on this night, while Alice was speaking. It was, with bitter jealousy, and something of anger also, that Isabel had approached them. The words she uttered would sting Alice, she well knew, and silence her for the rest of the evening: but she had not been so certain of the effect they would produce on Randolph. The readiness with which he devoted himself, however, to her, seeming totally to forget the presence of Alice, completely deceived her: she fancied that her sarcasm had disgusted him with her sister; and in this belief she surrendered herself to a whirl of blissful emotions, the sweeter for being so strange to that cold, haughty heart. Her exulting happiness inspired her, for the time, like a Corinne, so that Randolph, in admiration of her brilliant conversation, listened with even increasing interest and wonder.

The autumn days sped on rapidly. The iris-dye was stealing over the maple; the gum tree wore a deeper red; the little squirrels were gathering their nuts from the yellow leaved hickory; the vivid green of the oak and hemlock gradually became sombre; and the brightness of the Golden Rod, and the royal color of the Purple Mist grew deeper, as the strong south wind carried off the last of the aster flowers.

How intensely the party at Mr. Vernon's

enjoyed the weather. Isabel's sketch-book was always in requisition: a dozen times, each morning, she would ask Randolph's advice, by one device or another, always keeping him at her side. Alice, on these excursions, strayed off by herself, or sat gazing vacantly into distance. Sometimes, however, she remained listening to her sister and their guest, and though she rarely spoke, her soft eyes were always the mirror of Randolph's sentiments.

October melted away at last, like one of its own bright sunsets, and chill, dreary November came in. The few brown leaves, left on the branches, whirled downward through the grey, drizzling rain; the tall, skeleton-like trees swayed and groaned in the moaning wind; the lake became turbid; the lawn was covered with broken twigs and sodden with water; hill-side and valley wore the same unvarying russet; and the skies, even on the brightest days, were dark with wild, ragged clouds, foreboding bleak December.

Randolph had torn himself, at last, from the Hall, and was now busily at work in the city, composing pictures from some of his finest sketches. Isabel, from being gay almost to girlishness, had suddenly become silent, moody and cross. The country, she declared, was unbearable. She could not understand, she said, why papa persisted in staying out of town so late. The lanes were fetlock deep in mud, so that walking, or even riding was unpleasant; there was no society to be had: for her part she should die if they remained there.

Alice said nothing. But she would sit in a deep reverie, then suddenly recollect herself, color, blush, and perhaps rise and walk to the window, where she would, not unfrequently, fall into a second fit of musing.

Mr. Vernon's life, however, went on as usual. He had seen comparatively little of Randolph, except at dinner, for he always liked a nap in the evening, and the young artist's mornings, when not devoted to sketching, had been monopolized by Isabel. But the ill-humor of his eldest daughter became finally so decided, that he gave orders for returning to town, though he had half promised himself he would, for this year at least, keep his Christmas at Vernon Hall.

The Vernons had been nearly a week established in the city, before Randolph became aware of their return; for he kept close to his studies, working hard to make up for lost time. One evening, however, as he took a hurried walk for exercise, he saw a fair hand wave out of a carriage window toward him, and immediately the dashing equipage drew up to the curb stone, and Isabel Vernon, leaning forward, invited him to enter.

"We are going to drive into the country, and

you look jaded," she said. "It will do you good to breathe the fresh air." And she bestowed one of the most winning smiles on Randolph. "How d'ye do?" The words were addressed carelessly, almost scornfully, to two elegantly dressed young men, the *elite* of the "upper ten," who bowed profoundly to the heiress and belle.

Randolph was on the point of declining, but he saw the sweet face of Alice behind Isabel, and fancying that her dove-like eyes looked the invitation she was too timid to speak, he sprang into the carriage. The astonished exquisites gazed, as if a miracle had been worked before their sight. Never had they seen the haughty Miss Vernon so conciliatory even to one of their own set, and this affability to a penniless artist, for Randolph was known to one of them by sight, bewildered them.

From that time Randolph became again a frequent guest at the Vernons.

Occasionally he met the father, but not often, for the old gentleman liked his game of chess at the club too well to be frequently at home. Mr. Vernon was entirely ignorant of what was going on.

Randolph's evenings were spent in listening to Isabel's harp, an instrument on which she was a proficient, principally, perhaps, because she was aware it displayed her fine person to advantage. Alice was still mostly but a listener. Yet Randolph never left the presence of the sisters, without remembering every word and look of hers: and if he dreamed of either of the coveted heiresses, it was of Alice.

One evening, while at the tea-table, the servant brought in a superb bouquet for each of the ladies. Isabel ordered the footman to hand them to her, when she examined both attentively. Having noticed, with some chagrin, that there was no difference between them, she gave to her sister the one marked Alice.

Mr. Vernon seemed to feel a sudden curiosity.

"Pray, who had the taste to send those?" he said.

"Mr. Randolph, papa," replied Isabel. "We are going to the opera with him to-night, to hear Mrs. Wood's Norma."

"Rather an expensive pleasure for a young man who has to paint for a living," drily said Mr. Vernon. "I should think these bouquets, at least, quite superfluous. His purse is not as long as mine, remember, young ladies."

The quick crimson flushed over the brow and neck of Isabel, who immediately took up her bouquet and left the room.

But Alice, stealing up behind her father's chair, passed her cool, soft hand over his forehead, and kissed him with a low, "good night, papa," as if deprecating his anger. Mr. Vernon

patted her cheek, drew her to him for a kiss, and saying affectionately, "I hope you will enjoy yourself, butter-cup," rose from his chair, took up the newspaper, and left her for his library, with his eye soft as a woman's, for the moment, beneath its shaggy brows.

For Alice had always been his favorite child. She was so like her dead mother, so gentle, so affectionate, so submissive! The elder daughter's character had too many salient points for him; her cool, indomitable will came too often into contact with his own: perhaps, for such is human nature, she too much resembled himself.

When the young girl entered the drawing-room, she found Isabel gaily chatting with Randolph, so, after selecting a half-blown rose and some geranium leaves from her bouquet, she walked to a large pier-glass to arrange them in her dress.

"Why, Alice," said Isabel, "you pay a poor compliment to Mr. Randolph, to pull his bouquet to pieces in that manner."

Alice blushed crimson. Of late she had begun to comprehend her sentiments toward the young artist. But she did not dare to hope for such happiness as his love. And she would not have had him know her secret for the world. Often she repeated to herself the words of Helena.

"Thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun that looks upon his worshipper,
Yet knows of him no more."

The words of Isabel conveyed a censure, and, for an instant, Alice trembled lest Randolph might agree with her sister. How inexpressibly was she relieved when he spoke.

"She could not have paid it a greater compliment," said he, and with so much *empressement*, that the sharp flash of Isabel's eye, unusual in one so immovable, made Alice look at her in astonishment.

But no sooner had the dread of offending Randolph been removed, than a new subject of anxiety arose for Alice. She had noticed his manner when speaking: and it puzzled her, novice as she was. Had he penetrated her secret? The thought was humiliating. Better death than that. And yet what else could his conscious demeanor mean, both then, and when, after shawling her for the carriage, his hand clasped hers perceptibly for a moment?

Poor Alice, ignorant as a child, even in matters of the heart, of which the sex usually has an instinctive knowledge—what mental tortures she might have spared herself, if she had known that Randolph valued one of her smiles above all the attentions of Isabel!

The opera house was crowded. It was a

benefit night; and the dress-circle blazed with beauty and diamonds. Until the curtain rose, a loud hum of conversation filled the house, but among the topics of the evening, none commanded more remark than the intimacy of the Vernons with the poor artist. "The old judge actually died insolvent, ruined, root and branch, by speculations in coal lands," said an elderly gentleman, "and yet that haughty girl actually courts the son. I wonder if Vernon knows what is going on."

Isabel had a finely educated ear for music. She was most fastidious, and could coolly criticize a false note or a broken shake, in the midst of the most passionate scene. But poor little Alice!—how foolishly natural all seemed to her. The small hands were clenched, when Norma so fiercely defied the recreant Pollione; and her eyes were wonderfully humid, when the mother, in her mad anguish and insulted love, staggered up to take the lives of her sleeping children.

"For heaven's sake, Alice, do not give us a scene," whispered Isabel, noticing this agitation, "nothing can be in worse taste. You will mortify Mr. Randolph, by such an *expose* of your childishness." And she drew the crimson crape shawl around her shoulders.

The younger sister retreated into the corner of the box, and the tears, which had stood in her eyes before, now fell silently; while she wondered what made the usually indifferent Isabel so cross.

The winter was passing rapidly away. Alice sometimes accompanied Isabel on her round of wearisome gaiety; but oftener remained at home to talk or read with her father. Randolph frequently met them in company, and more frequently dropped in for a morning call; but, as they had been out several times when he came in the evening, he no longer appeared at that period of the day.

Isabel was restless and dissatisfied: often excessively out of humor; nor could Alice discover the cause. Of the truth of the matter, of the secret jealousy that gnawed her sister's heart, the unsuspecting girl had not an idea. Isabel now went out more than ever, and not unfrequently spoke of having met Randolph, when Alice had remained at home.

It was rarely that the younger sister saw the artist now. In the mornings, his calls were always hurried, and when Alice met him in society, he seemed laboring under a strange restraint. She feared she had offended him. Yet she dared not ask.

One evening a headache detained her at home. Isabel had gone to a large party, and Mr. Vernon was at his club. Alice felt low in spirits, almost to shedding tears, so she opened the piano, and

strove to cheer herself with music. But it would not do; and she gave up in despair. She was still sitting, her fingers listlessly running over the keys, when the door opened behind her; and looking hastily around, for she had expected no visitor, she recognized Randolph.

She started with embarrassment, and, as she welcomed him, her voice quite trembled. Strange to say, it was the first time they had ever been alone. But this was not sufficient to account for her agitation: she felt that it was all very childish, but in vain she tried to appear more composed. She stammered out something, she knew not what, regretting her sister's absence: but Randolph interrupted her.

"It is not your sister I came to see, but yourself," he said, his own voice slightly trembling, and still retaining her little hand. "All this dreary, long winter I have been watching for this opportunity. Alice, dear Alice, I love you."

Did she hear aright? Was it really Randolph before her? Or was all this a dream? She gave one hurried glance at that manly face, and then, reading all in the frank, yet anxious look, she burst into tears.

At a late hour George Randolph left the house, with a firmer tread and lighter eye than usual; while Alice glided up to her chamber, with smiles and tears flitting over her flushed face.

What a change in her destiny three little hours had caused! Her despondency was gone: she wondered she had ever had any: she pressed her hand to her heart, the weight of happiness seemed so painful.

Having reached her room, she walked to her dressing-table, drew off a bracelet and some rings, seated herself in a lounging chair, and fell into one of those long sweet reveries, which are known but once in a life-time. Alice certainly was never before so long making her *toilette de nuit*. One article was laid aside; then followed a walk across the room; then there was a pause by the dressing-glass; and all this while flitting smiles intervened between steadfast looks as if gazing into futurity.

At a late hour Isabel returned. Alice had not slept yet, and, as she quietly watched her sister, as with a wearied "oh, dear," Isabel slowly laid aside her ball dress, she wondered how it was possible for any human being to be so long preparing for bed.

At last Alice could contain herself no longer: besides the bright gas-light annoyed her.

"Are you not tired, and ready for bed, Bella?" she said.

"I shall be there directly," sharply replied Isabel, who was more ill-humored than ever; for she had gone out expecting to meet Randolph at the ball and had been disappointed.

Alice said no more, but nervously watched Isabel, as the latter placed piece after piece of jewelry in the velvet cases with a nonchalance that almost drove Alice wild.

At last the gas was turned down, and Isabel retired to bed. There was silence for a few moments, during which Alice crept closer to her elder sister. Suddenly she said,

"Mr. Randolph was here this evening."

"Ah," said Isabel, with a slight start, as if a serpent had stung her. Then, with a sneer, she added, "I suppose your headache is cured now."

For a moment the confiding heart of Alice was chilled. But, in a short time, she stole her arm around her sister's waist, and whispered, "Bella, dear, I have something to tell you."

Could Alice have felt the heart that was beating beneath her arm, she would have found it growing cold, so cold: for Isabel, at these words, instinctively divined the truth. But Alice, simple child, never suspected her sister's emotion: so she went on, as she drew still nearer to Isabel, "you know I said Mr. Randolph was here to-night, and—sister, he asked me to marry him."

"Pshaw, you choke me," said Isabel, and she rudely flung the arms of Alice from her, turned quickly away, and said no more. She had, indeed, been choking, but not from the white arms of Alice. She was even yet choking; but it was with mortification and rage. He did love Alice then: it was as she had feared: and she—she who had never stooped to love man before—was despised. Oh! if she could but have given vent to her feelings. But she dared not, for there beside her was her successful rival. It was enough to stifle her. She tore the throat of her night dress open, gasping for breath, her heart convulsed by these terrible and conflicting emotions.

All this was as unknown to Alice as if it had been going on in another sphere. Still she wondered why Isabel did not speak. So, after a few moments of silence, she resumed.

"Are you not glad, dear Isabel? You always seemed to like him."

The elder sister felt that she must speak, or be betrayed. But she could not counterfeit entirely. She answered sharply,

"I care nothing about it. What is it to me. I am tired and want sleep. Do leave me alone, will you?" This was because Alice, at hearing her speak of being fatigued, had laid her soft hand on her forehead, as if to soothe her.

The young *fiancée* drew back hurt and disappointed. She found that even as bright a love as hers could be clouded. After a few restless turnings, and some vain wonder as to what had made Isabel so cross, she fell asleep with smiles on her red lips, and pleasant dreams in her heart.

But the elder sister slept not. While Alice continued awake, Isabel remained immovable as stone, but, when the young girl slumbered at last, the sister, rising on one arm, sternly regarded the calm, innocent face. Hate was in every lineament of that haughty countenance, as it thus gazed down on the sleeper; and not only hate, but revenge. The pale moonlight—for the winter moon had now risen—struggling, in faint gleams, between the thick curtains, gave a ghastly aspect to that agitated face, so that it looked not unlike that of some ghoul contemplating its lifeless victim.

What a tempest of emotions swept, to and fro, in that haughty woman's heart. Rejected!—and for whom? A mere child, with a baby face. And by whom? A penniless artist, an adventurer. Was it for this she had lavished on him her love? Was it for this she had gone out everywhere to meet him, even on this very evening?

The young girl stirred. The exclamation of her sister half aroused her. But she still lingered in the realm of dreams. Her red lips half parted, disclosing the little pearly teeth; her cheek flushed with a warm blush; her fingers closed softly as if pressing some loved hand; and murmuring "George," she smiled rapturously, and then sank again into deep sleep.

It was gall and wormwood to the watcher. She had been frightened, at first, lest her sister had understood her words. She was now maddened, almost beyond control, by this little scene. She fairly gnashed her teeth. Oh! it is terrible, when a haughty soul, like hers, after abasing itself before another, is spurned, and thrown back on its own contempt.

The very restraint which she exercised over the outward show of her feelings, and which gave her such a cold, immovable aspect, now avenged itself on her, by increasing the fury of this mental hurricane. For hours, during that night, it is not too much to say she was almost beside herself. Morning found her still awake, looking haggard and wan, but composed at last, at least to the eyes of others.

While dressing, Alice, turning away her head, recurred to the subject that engrossed her thoughts.

"Bella," she said, "you seemed so tired last night, that I could not talk to you, as I wished."

It was well for Isabel that the young girl's eyes were bashfully turned away; for, notwith-

standing the strong will of the elder sister, her whole face was blanched at these words. But she bit her lip, though the angry gleam of the tigress still lurked in her eye.

"Do you think," continued Alice, still looking away, "that papa will be very angry with me for my engagement? I never thought of such a thing, but George said he was afraid papa would think I ought not to marry a man, whose dependence was so precarious. I told him I knew papa would give his consent willingly. But, this morning, I do not feel so sure of it. Do you think, Bella dear, that he will object?"

Isabel's mind had been in a whirl, from the first word uttered by Alice. Mr. Vernon would certainly refuse his consent!—why had she never thought of this before? Or, if he inclined at last to yield, he could easily be persuaded otherwise. Then, if Alice married Randolph, she would be thrust from the old man's heart; and that, that would almost kill her. All this could be brought to pass: all this, and perhaps even more. Isabel saw already the way. Oh! what devil from hell, in that little minute, for it was no more, put these thoughts into that cruel, haughty heart.

It was over. The resolve was taken. And now Isabel calmly answered her sister.

"There is no doubt of it. You know papa hates adventurers."

Alice turned pale: reflected a while: then approached her sister and kissed her.

"Isabel dear," said she, "you can talk to papa much better than I can, for I get frightened when he looks so sternly:—will you not tell him all about it? I know I am a coward. But you can persuade him to anything, and if he once denies me, I have not courage to mention a subject again."

Ah! words too true. Had that little heart of thine but been braver, Alice!

Isabel, controlling herself, returned the kiss and answered,

"I will do all I can for you, Alice. You had better say nothing to papa yourself. Leave everything to me. I have no doubt I can win his consent."

"You are the best sister in the world," was the reply, and tears of gratitude dimmed the eyes of Alice. "George is coming, this morning, to see papa; but I will persuade him to say nothing till you have prepared the way."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE CARELESS WORDS.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

VARIOUS were the comments of the good people of A—— when the sign of Alfred Keith, M. D., was first nailed upon the window shutter. The old ladies wondered if his cures were as infallible as Swaim's Panacea; the young ones if he was married, or handsome, loved pic nics and sleighing parties; whilst the gentlemen of the village positively declared that if he was a young physician, it was presumption in him to endeavor to compete with old Dr. Smith.

But alas for the interest hanging around Alfred Keith. Had he enveloped himself in mystery, his office would soon have filled with patients, but it was quickly known that he only came to A—— in order to increase, if possible, a very small income; that he had never prescribed a dozen times in his life, and that he was too poor and too agreeable for mammas with marriageable daughters to care about cultivating his acquaintance.

Popularity, however, came faster than patients. Dr. Keith could play backgammon and chess with the old gentlemen; pick up balls of knitting cotton, or tie up stray flowering stalks for their ladies; and ride, dance, quote poetry, and sing with the daughters.

But with none did Dr. Keith's voice harmonize so well as with Clara Graham's. Clara was the belle of the village. Her father was the richest man, her mother the proudest lady, and Clara the prettiest and sauciest girl in the place.

The summer time sped on gaily, and rumor said that the doctor and Clara were engaged. The white jessamine flowers over a certain vine-covered piazza, at the side of Mr. Graham's house, might have confirmed the report could they have spoken, but Mr. Graham was supposed never to trouble himself with anything of less importance than money, and his lady was entirely too haughty a dame for the curious to risk the fear of her displeasure by prying questions. Had Clara been asked if the report was true, she would have undoubtedly replied "yes," with such a comically serious face, that no one would have for a moment believed her.

Not that she was ashamed of marrying a poor man, as Alfred Keith undoubtedly was, but the sensitive delicacy of the young girl shrunk from having her love talked and jested about.

One afternoon a party of village gossips happened to assemble at Mrs. Jackson's, where the doctor boarded, and the conversation turned upon

the visits of a gentleman to the place, who was supposed to be an admirer of Clara Graham's.

"They *do* say he is very rich, but one can't tell now-a-days whether a man has money or not; fine feathers make such fine birds," said old Mrs. Patterson.

"Well, then, he need not be coming to see Clara Graham, for, take my word for it, she will never marry a poor man," replied Mrs. Jackson, putting the half knit stocking up toward the window, in the deep evening twilight, to take up a stitch.

"I thought the doctor here had his eye on her," said another, looking at him and laughing; "but you cut your wisdom teeth before you came here, didn't you, doctor? She would have dismissed you with a smile and a bow like a queen."

Alfred Keith laughed, and said there was no danger of Miss Graham's discarding him, but at the same time he felt rather uncomfortable.

"Could Clara be ashamed of the engagement, that she insisted upon its being kept so quiet?" asked he, mentally. He had told her frankly of his small dependance, but old Dr. Smith was nearly superannuated, and his own practise was increasing daily. Clara had declared herself perfectly willing to share his small fortune, but her lover's pride had often chafed that he must ask such a sacrifice from her. The evening after the tea drinking at Mrs. Jackson's, Clara met Dr. Keith at a party. She was the gayest of the gay, and constantly attended by the stranger to whom allusion had been made the afternoon before.

"What do you think, Clara? Mary Hay is going to marry young Abbott," said a friend at her side.

"Poor Mary! how she is throwing herself away. Why he is as poor as a church mouse, and as to this love in a cottage, it is more romantic than comfortable," was the laughing rejoinder.

"I think Mary will be very happy though; she is not ambitious, and is accustomed to making sacrifices. If she loves Mr. Abbott all those petty trials will be light," replied her friend.

Clara gave a groan, threw up her hands and eyes with much earnestness, and said,

"Poor little innocent thing! You know nothing at all about it. How can love exist through the soap-suds of washing day? And where is the romance of sweeping from garret to cellar with

a white pocket-handkerchief tied around one's head, or burning one's hands and arms preserving time? Oh, no! let me marry a rich man, who can afford to keep servants for all this. A poor man indeed! he would be the death of me."

Careless words, carelessly spoken, but how bitter the fruits!

Dr. Keith was standing near Clara at the time. The gossip of the afternoon before, had made him suspicious. He feared these feelings *did* influence Clara, and that she repented her promise to him. He drew near to her, and said in a low voice, "are you serious, Miss Graham?"

"As a judge," was the laughing reply.

The annoyance of the lover increased, and he said with some asperity, "if I was engaged to a young lady who really entertained these sentiments, I should be most happy for a release."

Clara looked up in surprise, but seeing how seriously he had taken her trifling, she answered, as the haughty flush mounted to neck and brow, "and I should be too happy to release him."

A moment after she would have given anything to have been able to recall what she had just said in the impulse of anger, but it was too late. Dr. Keith had moved to another part of the room, and the conversation was soon changed by the party around.

In a short time the chafed lover bowed his adieux to his hostess, saying there was a sick child whom he must visit that night. A few hours before, he had assured the distressed mother that it was but a cold ailing the infant, but now one might judge that it was threatened with an incipient scarlet fever. Mrs. Jones' baby received one visit more that night than it would have done, had it not have been for Clara Graham's careless words.

And how fared it with Clara? She was unusually gay after her lover's departure, but one might judge that she expected some one by the anxiety with which she watched the opening of the door. The flush which had mounted to her brow died away, leaving only a bright spot on each cheek, and an unusual brilliancy in her eyes.

"Why, Miss Graham, are you ill?" asked the lady of the house, as Clara's hand touched hers in putting down a vase of flowers. It was icy cold, whilst the fever spot on the face burned hotly.

"I do not feel well, but a night's sleep will restore all, I hope," said Clara.

But there was no sleep for Clara that night. She reached home in a fever of anger and excitement. She could recognize no reason why Dr. Keith should take her jesting words so seriously. In her indignation she forgot how much reason she had given for offence, though unintentionally;

how sensitive a poor man is, who loves. Clara was one of those peculiar natures, the very depth of whose affection makes them undemonstrative. She forgot that he did not know as well as she, how bravely her strong heart would battle out the world's trials with him by her side.

The night passed in this conflict between resentment and love, and the morning found her wearied out and weeping. After an hour or two of unfreshing sleep, she arose and hurried through her *toilette*. But Clara's haste was unnecessary. The leaves of all her music books had been turned; the plants in the window had the dead leaves plucked off, and placed toward the sun; one piece of sewing after another thrown aside, and still Dr. Keith did not make his appearance.

Clara felt angry again. A few hours before, had he come, she would frankly have acknowledged her thoughtlessness, but now, at the ring of the door bell, the old haughty spirit rose up as she thought, "he has been giving me time to repent, I suppose," and her manner chilled to iciness.

Although she knew the voice and step perfectly well, Clara sat unmoved in her room till the servant announced Dr. Keith.

She arose with the most imperturbable calmness, and brushed off the snips of zephyr worsted which clung to her dress as if to her own heart, she would not acknowledge her excited feelings.

When Clara entered the parlor, her lover was standing looking out of the window, with his back to the door. Whether it was that her light footstep was unheard, or that he was determined that she should speak first, Clara could not determine. For the moment her impulse was to go up and place her hand on his shoulder, but pride forbade, so she only said, coldly, "good morning, Dr. Keith."

He turned and bowed, but made no effort to advance, or take her hand.

Clara drew up her tall figure, then took her seat, and carelessly turned over the sofa cushion against which she was leaning. "Will you not be seated, sir?" she said.

"Thank you, no. I called, Miss Graham, to release you from an engagement, which, by your own avowal, was irksome to you. It is not so great a curse after all, this being poor; one finds out so soon how much such a petty thing as a heart is worth," said he, bitterly.

Clara sat with her eyes fixed unquittingly on his face, and except that at this last taunt, the bright spot sprang to her cheek, and the lines of her flexible mouth grew wonderfully rigid, she gave no signs of the death-throes in her heart.

"You will remember, if you please, sir, that I have before said I should be most happy to be

released. I see no chance of happiness in our union;" and she arose and bowed haughtily to her lover.

He had hoped when he went in that Clara would have made some apology, but now that was all over, so coldly bidding her good morning, he departed.

And Clara, poor Clara! she was not one to give way to violent weeping, but she threw herself on the sofa, buried her head in the cushions, and after one deep groan, lay like one dead.

A long time after she arose and went up stairs, but to both dinner and tea she excused herself on the plea of a severe headache.

When her mother stopped in her room before retiring, that night, she was alarmed at Clara's appearance, and sent for Dr. Smith, who pronounced her dangerously ill.

Day after day she lingered in a violent fever; and when she rose from her sick bed, her mother asked no questions as to the absence of Dr. Keith, for she had gained intelligence enough, not from Clara's ravings, but from the heart-broken voice and look of her sick child.

Years have passed, and Dr. Keith, the bachelor, is a rich man in the village, and the once gay, proud Clara, is Clara Graham still, because of those CARELESS WORDS.

GERTRUDE GRAY.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

CHAPTER I.

A RATHER large and pleasantly situated room, with two windows draped with blue flowered damask and embroidered lace, looped up with silver cords; a soft, thick carpet of the most brilliant dyes, a handsomely carved bedstead, with rich curtains and counterpane, and heavily ruffled pillows; ottomans with luxuriously soft cushions; a pretty work-table, covered with various scraps of elegant needle-work, begun, but probably not soon to be completed; a marble-top washstand, with toilet service of gold-band china; and a mantel profusely decorated with little "nick-nackerics" of no meaning or use, save perhaps to evidence the taste of the purchaser; such was the room of which Gertrude Gray reigned mistress and queen. There was not much similarity between the appearance of this and the other apartments of the household; and, considering her father's limited means, and the necessary economy visible in other matters, a casual observer might have deemed the display here somewhat out of place: but that mattered little to Miss Gertrude. "Her father was so fond of money," she said. Poor man! behind the counter of his retail drygoods store his life was wearisome and irksome enough to impress him with a high estimate of every dollar. She had labored in vain to persuade him that the parlor furniture (bought at the era of his marriage) was too old-fashioned to be ever genteel; he was deaf to all arguments, and blind to all defects in this matter; but he willingly allowed his youngest daughter a little pocket-money now and then, which, he thought, was spent usefully; but which in reality the thoughtless, vain girl spent in adorning her room; heedless of the numerous trifling wants it might have supplied—of the many little comforts and luxuries it might have procured for her delicate, but ever toiling mother. Ah! such is but too often the case.

And yet with all this vain show Gertrude is not happy. See her now as she enters her chamber, and closes the door behind her with something of unnecessary noise, and with a not very gentle action places a pretty little lamp upon the work-table. It is a rainy autumn evening, and the luxurious apartment looks all the more bright and comfortable from the noise of the storm without; but its beauties have no effect upon the

fair owner. Throwing back the raven tresses from her frowning brow, she draws forth from a recess a richly cushioned arm-chair, and throws herself haughtily upon it in an attitude of mingled grief and passion. Tears of vexation fall slowly from her large black eyes, and her lips are firmly compressed, and her daintily-slippered foot taps the flower-wrought foot-stool impatiently, as if the unquiet feelings within were seeking some outlet. Fair Gertrude, what can have brought this storm across thy sunny path?

The door is softly opened, and a middle-aged woman enters slowly, and with some hesitation. Her calico dress and apron, and care-worn brow, damp with the fatigue of domestic labors, present a strange contrast to the young lady's silk dresses and sparkling jewels; and yet she is the mother. You could tell it by the soft, beautiful light of her eyes as she approaches her daughter, and the look of anxious tenderness that shades her furrowed face as she sees that daughter's grief. "Gertrude, my child, why those tears? it grieves me to the heart to see you thus:" and the voice faltered with emotion. But Gertrude only tossed her proud head, and turned peevishly from the anxious face that bent over her.

Ah, wilful girl! Turn not so fretfully away, nor requite with gestures of impatience or anger the fond solicitude of a mother's heart. Mayhap thou'lt see the day when thou would'st give the gems of Golconda for a token of affection—for one word of love—unwearying, disinterested, long-patient love, such as now thou deem'st wearisome. Thou may'st see the hour when—thy own kindness unvalued, thy feelings outraged, thy affections scorned and slighted—thou wilt kneel upon a lowly grave, and long for the gentle love that once blessed thee—long to be folded for but one moment to a mother's sympathizing bosom—to feel her tender hand upon thy throbbing brow; but from the unpitying tomb in answer to thy yearning sobs and wailings, will come up only the remembrance of that unselfish heart which thy waywardness might pain, but could not change—that deep, devoted love which thou didst repay with indifference, with heartlessness. Turn not, then, idly away from thy mother's feeble form; nor view carelessly those purest, holiest drops that ever bedew mortal cheeks—a mother's tears.

"Gertrude," continued Mrs. Gray, after a pause, during which she combatted her emotion,

"I cannot express the pain you give me. Here with no trial to vex you, with no sorrow worthy of the name to lessen your happiness, you are daily repining because your father will not, cannot sanction a silly attachment; insulting by your unwarranted murmurings a God who has bestowed upon you every needful blessing."

"I cannot help it," was the hasty reply. "I would give them all up to obtain that greater blessing, without which I can never be happy."

"You would, Gertrude!" said the mother, in sad and slightly reproachful tones; "you would give up your parents' love, your sister's affection, the artless endearment of your little nephew and nieces; you would relinquish your comfortable home, the plenty that surrounds you, the good health you enjoy—these and a thousand other advantages you could yield up for a man like De Lancey—a vain, idle, senseless fop, with nothing to recommend him but his fine person, his graceful manner that shows you off to advantage when waltzing—a flippant tongue that charms you by what you consider eloquence, and a pretty style of complimenting that flatters your vanity. Ah, my poor child! I fear that you will one day regret the infatuation that misleads you, and prevents your bestowing a proper degree of attention on a more worthy object."

"Yes, I know what you would say, but I hear enough from father about that dull, awkward booby he thinks so much of, and——"

"How can you speak so, Gertrude? There are few young men of your acquaintance less dull or more sensible than Charles Elmer; and if he has not the easy appearance and unblushing impudence of De Lancey, he is as far from being disagreeable in his manners as he is."

"Oh, I know you are all strangely prepossessed in his favor, so there is no use in my saying a word on the subject; though considering I am the person most interested, I think I might be allowed a voice. But if I cannot speak I can act; and I will never marry a hum-drum character like Charles Elmer; too poor and too miserly ever to make a figure in the world."

"Charles is neither poor nor miserly," said Mrs. Gray, with some sternness. "He is in good business as you know full well; and both able and willing to set out in life in a respectable style, such as should satisfy any sensible——"

"Oh, yes!" interrupted the wilful girl again, with a contemptuous sneer. "Very respectable, like father! I am ashamed to ask any one to come to the house, it is so shabby and mean; I have no idea of having my own house the same."

"You have really acquired ridiculous ideas for one in your sphere of life, which is merely that of a person in moderate circumstances; nor could all the grandeur you could pile around you make

you any more; but, on the contrary, would serve to render you a laughing-stock in the estimation of those who know your father's circumstances. Neither could it add to your happiness since the little ornaments you have, at unnecessary expense, collected here, do not make you more contented than if you inhabited an unfurnished attic."

Gertrude cast a glance of something like contempt around the room. The novelty of her possessions had passed, and they were no longer valued. She returned, however, to the previous subject.

"On one point I am resolved, and no arguments nor persuasions can alter my determination. I shall never marry Charles Elmer, nor any one like him; and, if I cannot have Rupert De Lancey, (of which now I have no hope, since he seems deeply wounded by father's unaccountable rudeness to him) I at least will never bestow my hand upon one less richly endowed by nature, birth, education, and fortune."

"It is easy by a multiplicity of words to render our language impressive in our own opinion," replied Mrs. Gray, calmly. "Mr. De Lancey's gifts from nature are limited to a handsome face and fine figure; he gives us no reason to suppose that the nobler qualities of head or heart, which, alone, are truly valuable, are his; as to birth, we have only his own representation of descent from a noble French family; allowing this to be strictly true, I cannot see that it renders him the better or more worthy; he has a superficial education, which enables him to appear eloquent and learned to a girl like you easily caught by high-sounding words; and as to fortune, like birth, we must take only his own words; there is no other proof."

"I don't know what you call proof; the appearance he makes is a sufficient evidence of his wealth to all unbiased persons; but when people will persist in their prejudices one might as well expect the blind to see. A little while ago you said wealth did not contribute to happiness."

"But you seemed to think it essential to yours, Gertrude. Yet if he had the wealth of the Indies; were he the most talented and learned man of the age; descended from the proudest family on earth, still would I deem him unworthy of my child, so long as his character is such as can be branded with censure."

"Yes, by the envious and malignant."

"The persons who informed your father of some incidents in his past life are neither one nor the other."

"Well," persisted Gertrude, seemingly not desirous to dwell on this point. "At all events one thing is certain; however poor I might be I shall never become dependant on father's exertions

like Amy, with her four children, burling such expense upon him that he cannot give a proper living to his own family. But of course there was no objection made to her marriage with a poor schoolmaster. Her wishes were not thwarted, of course, but mine are never heeded."

"You are, indeed, sadly altered, Gertrude, thus to speak of your affectionate sister. How would my very soul rejoice were the man on whom you have thoughtlessly fixed your fancy, like the youth who wooed and won my poor Amy; for though they were poor, and various misfortunes concurred to keep them so, they had riches which were worth mines of worldly wealth; and should trouble or sorrow ever come upon you, my child, I can wish for you no greater blessing than to be able to bear it with the meekness, the uncomplaining resignation with which your sister has endured her many bitter trials. The dear girl! what should I do without her now? miserable and lonely would I be indeed. And if you think us more particular in your regard, Gertrude, it should be a motive of deeper love and gratitude on your part, and not cause for anger or vexation. The sorrows of one child may indeed make us painfully fearful for our other daughter; the more so as in your case there would be trials of a different nature than she had to suffer. But it is late, and I must retire to rest. Good night, my child, I would fain hope that calm reflection may change your present mood."

The mother pressed a fervent kiss on the brow of her beautiful but wayward daughter, and with a sigh retired to her own apartment.

CHAPTER II.

"I CANNOT bear this suspense any longer—if you truly loved me you would not keep me in this anxiety, merely to humor the unreasonable opposition of your parents to our union."

The speaker was a very fine-looking man, but there was a dark scowl upon his broad forehead, and his voice and manner betrayed quite as much impatience as love.

"What can I do, Rupert? Have I not tried, oh, how vainly, to soften my father's prejudices?"

"Do? why, like a girl of spirit and proper strength of mind as until lately I imagined you to be, choose for yourself in a matter that concerns your happiness, not theirs. A private marriage——"

"Oh, no! no!" interrupted his companion, none other than Gertrude Gray. "I could never consent to that——never."

"True love can consent to anything," replied the other, in a tone of bitter reproach. "Were your love in any way proportioned to mine—were it but a tithe of what I feel for you, you would not count anything a sacrifice."

"It would be no sacrifice to me to give up all for your love, Rupert, but my poor father, my tender mother, I cannot break their hearts." And the maiden's voice faltered, for though fashion and frivolity had blighted much of the warmth of her early feelings, she was not yet altogether heartless.

"No one asks you to take any such desperate step, at least I do not," was the cool reply. "I merely wish you to consent to that which can alone ensure our happiness. Your father is violently opposed to my addresses, for what cause I am sure I cannot imagine; we have waited now some time to gain his favor, it is useless to delay any longer. Once married he would soon yield his forgiveness, and all would be well."

"I cannot do it! Do not urge me, Rupert—my heart is weak in everything but its love for you, and I cannot bear to refuse what you desire. But in a little time all will be as we wish. I know my father will yield to my entreaties; and surely it will be better to wait for his approval of our union, than rashly venture, depending on his affection to pardon such a step on my part as—as——"

"Well, say the word—what is there in it so terrible; elopements take place every day, sometimes only for the fun and excitement of the thing; though I confess for this I would not urge you: but in this case I see no alternative. You must recollect that I cannot always remain here. Affairs at home demand my presence, and even now I am spending time which is invaluable. I can wait no longer. Come, my sweet love, say that you love your own Rupert sufficiently to give up all for his sake—to fly with him to a home of love and happiness. Say you will fly, dearest!"

"Oh, forbear, Rupert! I entreat—I beg," cried the distressed girl, as she leaned her head upon his shoulder, and wept aloud. "Do not try me so."

But the heart to which she appealed was of no such noble nature as to yield to her request; he saw that he had gained some influence, and he followed it up by argument and entreaty; by all that reproach, slight irony, gentle persuasions and protestations of ardent love could promise success, till at length filial love yielded, and the infatuated girl, though with many tears and misgivings, consented to elope with her lover. Arrangements were talked over; plans proposed and rejected; till De Lancey hit upon one which seemed feasible; and thus at length they separated.

There was an air of irresolution about Gertrude which her lover could not fail to remark; but satisfied with her promise to meet again secretly, as she now often did, he saw her depart

with a gleam of triumph resting on his really handsome face.

The next evening Gertrude accompanied her parents to a bridal party, at the house of one of their most intimate friends. It was rather late when they entered, and most of the company had assembled; nor was it long before Gertrude's roving glance detected the graceful form of her lover, who was doing the agreeable to a group of gay young damsels in the adjoining room. The evening was far advanced when they met; and Mr. Gray, who had been attentively observing De Lancey, was equally surprised and pleased on beholding him pass his daughter with only a formal bow of recognition, which she returned with one of corresponding coldness; though at the same moment a scarlet hue mantled her very temples. Coupling this with the remark made but a few nights before by Gertrude, regarding the apparent change in her suitor since her father's strongly expressed disapproval of their intercourse, the parents drew from it a most pleasing augury. How should they know that this was but a preconcerted act to lull suspicion; and that Gertrude's blush was caused neither by mortification nor anger at the apparent slight, but by an instinctive feeling of shame and self-humiliation, at being thus an actor in a scheme of duplicity and falsehood? Not long after De Lancey left the company; and Gertrude, who had been out of spirits all the evening, expressed her wish to return home. As her father rose to comply with her request, one of the daughters of their entertainer came up, who, chiding her abstracted guest for such a thought, told her she had something to say to her in private first, and, with a graceful apology to Mr. and Mrs. Gray, led her away. By a previously arranged plan the two proceeded directly to the garden, where,

whispering a few words of caution, Gertrude's companion disappeared, leaving her alone with Rupert, whose object was to discuss the plan of elopement, and strengthen her wavering resolution. When he thought his purpose accomplished, he led her faltering steps back to her conductress, by whom she was once more placed in her parents' charge.

A day passed. Gertrude spent most of it in her room, where she was several times surprised weeping bitterly. Her watchful mother, thinking her grief was occasioned by her lover's inconstancy, proposed to her husband that Gertrude should pay a long-meditated visit to his cousin who lived in a neighboring town. Mr. Gray thought the suggestion admirable; he hoped that his daughter's unwise attachment would soon pass away, and that change of scene would greatly conduce to this desirable end. Accordingly at the breakfast-table he introduced

the subject by casually mentioning his cousin, adding,

"By the way, Gertrude, when do you intend to go to Allantown? I thought you promised to go there some time ago."

"So she did," said Mrs. Gray, "but she seems to have forgotten it. I dare say Cousin Jane thinks it very strange, for you know the last time she was here she declared she would never come again till some of us went to her house. Gertrude is the only one that can conveniently go; and I do wish, my dear, that you would think about it."

"She has been thinking long enough," interposed her husband. "It is now time to act. What say you, my girl—how soon can you be ready?"

Gertrude could not immediately reply. The proposed trip to Allantown had been talked over as the most feasible plan for her elopement; but while she was vainly striving to propose it without an embarrassment which might awaken suspicions, her parents had unconsciously come to her relief. Mistaking her continued silence for indifference, her father urged her to consent, and was at length satisfied by the assurance (given with apparent reluctance) that she would be ready to start that very evening, he promising to accompany her most of the distance. As they rose from table, her sister asked if she should assist her in packing. "Oh, no; I shall only take one trunk, and that I can soon pack," replied Gertrude, carelessly, as she ascended to her chamber. Her thoughts were not very pleasant companions, and, finding that silence and solitude only served to encourage them, she soon prepared for a walk, and went out to pay a few calls to her more intimate acquaintances before she left the city.

At the house where she had last met De Lancey she left a note informing him of the arrangement made; and then slowly wended her way home, at the time she knew the noontide meal was over, for not only was her mind too much harassed to allow her to partake of food, but she felt unequal to the task of conversing with any degree of interest or cheerfulness: and although it had in fact been several days since she had done so, she now with the inquietude and alarm of a guilty mind, trembled lest her secret intentions should be discovered, or inferred from her manner. The greater part of the afternoon was spent alone, endeavoring to busy herself in packing her trunk with the articles she had selected from her amply furnished wardrobe; but she was growing rapidly sick at heart, and, at length, was unable to restrain her tears. "Oh, I will not go—I cannot, must not do it," she repeated again and again, as she heard her mother pleasantly singing her

youngest grandchild to his afternoon slumber, and thought how the step she meditated would change the cheerful tones of that dear voice. "I will not go!" But, alas! at the moment her better angel was gaining the mastery, the confidant appeared with a hastily penned answer to her note, expressing her lover's rapture at the success of their scheme thus far, and assuring her that he would meet her at the point her father would accompany her too; this plan being in all respects the best calculated to prevent the possibility of detection.

Gertrude's friend remained with her until the time for her departure with her father, and by her lively conversation effectually relieved her of the troublesome whispers of conscience: but her courage nearly failed her when the parting hour arrived, and she bade farewell, perhaps forever, to her mother and sister, and caressed again and again the little ones who could not understand why grandpa was taking Aunt Gertrude away from them. It needed all her strength of purpose, aided by not a few reproving glances from her thoughtless companion to go through that parting scene with a reasonable degree of composure; but by a strong effort she kept back the grief that swelled her heart, and thus forced herself to mingle a smile with the tears that moistened her eyes as she received her mother's parting embrace. "When will you write, Gertrude?" inquired her sister. "I cannot yet say, for you know I must tell father when I write what day to come for me. There is no use in writing twice in so short a time."

Alas! how soon after the first yielding to temptation may a habit of prevarication and deceit be formed.

Mr. Gray beguiled the time as well as he could during the first part of the journey; but Gertrude was greatly relieved when the time came for the passengers to retire to their berths, and she could indulge her tears without restraint. The conflict with her feelings was severe and arduous. The love for De Lancey was not of a nature to be easily overcome; she loved him with the ardor and intensity of an impetuous, enthusiastic disposition, prone to make an idol of the object of its affection; but she also loved her parents tenderly, and could not delude herself into a persuasion that her secret union with De Lancey would but lightly affect them. She knew that it would inflict real and enduring anguish, especially upon her mother, and she writhed in mental agony as the shameful duplicity of her conduct rose vividly to her imagination. As the steamboat bore her swiftly over the dark waters, every rush of the waves sent a chill of fear through her trembling frame, and this alone, so different from the feelings of pleasurable

excitement she had often experienced in the like situation, would have sufficed to convince her of the sinfulness of her present purpose. Exhausted by this mental contest, she at length silenced the upbraidings of conscience by a firm determination to proceed to her relative's house in Allantown on the morrow; and she planned many cogent and persuasive arguments by which she could surely induce her lover to consent to her desire to defer their marriage for some time longer; and so becoming more calm as her good resolution strengthened, she at length fell asleep.

It was scarcely daylight when the boat touched the landing at a small village, from whence to Allantown the journey was pursued by rail-road; and Mr. Gray having snugly ensconced his daughter in a comfortable seat in the car, bade her "good-bye," as a boat was about starting in which he could return home. She was alone, and her heart beat wildly and tumultuously. A step approached; she turned timidly expecting to see her lover, but it was her father who stood beside her.

"I bought you some magazines and papers, Gertrude," he said, "that you may not feel lonesome. I am sorry I cannot go all the way with you, but you will reach Allantown in two or three hours, and these will amuse you till then."

How the daughter's heart approaches her as he spoke. Scarcely could she murmur her thanks for this new proof of kindness which was ever thoughtful for her; her father wondered at her agitation, but the steamboat bell warned him to lose no time in noticing it. Just as the boat left the shore, and the bell rang for the departure of the cars, De Lancey took a seat beside the rash maiden who had left all for his sake. He took her trembling hand closely in his, and whispered softly a few words of love and encouragement. Where now was her resolution of the previous night? Gone—forgotten at the appearance of the tempter, and she sat in silence and meditation as the train proceeded.

Ere noon she was the wife of Rupert De Lancey, and seated in a splendid car was whirling rapidly away from Allantown on the road to his distant home.

CHAPTER III:

"How strange it is that Gertrude does not write!" exclaimed Mrs. Gray, as she sat beside her husband, who had been confined to his room for several days by a slight attack of fever.

Poor woman—for the last week she had daily—hourly—made the same remark, little reeking of the news she was so soon to hear. Before Mr. Gray had time to reply, one of the children came bounding into the room with letters which the clerk had just brought from the post-office.

"Perhaps we shall hear now," said the wife, joyfully, as she watched him glancing at the superscription of each. "Yes, this is her writing," and Mr. Gray threw aside the other letters as he eagerly broke the seal. But one glance at the contents seemed to paralyze him. He looked again, and then with a deep groan let the paper fall from his hands.

"What is the matter?" inquired his wife, in a voice of agony. "What has happened to my poor child—is she ill?"

"No—my poor wife, she is not ill—take comfort, for she is well, yet rather would I see her quietly laid in her coffin, than to hear of her being married to De Lancey."

Mrs. Gray looked at him in speechless horror; he drew her to his throbbing heart as if there he would shield her from sorrow; and as Amy had now appeared, anxiously inquiring if there was any account from her sister, he began with faltering voice to read the letter. The writing was jagged and irregular, as if the agitation of the writer had rendered her almost incapable of fulfilling the task—was blistered with tears, and in many places disfigured and nearly effaced with blots. It read as follows:

SPRINGVILLE, Ala., Nov., 10th, 18—.

"My ever dear Parents—I know not how to begin this letter, nor in what words to ask your forgiveness for the step I have taken, but I trust to your own indulgent tenderness to regard it with lenity, and to believe that nothing but the conviction that I should otherwise be miserable for life; would have induced me to act in this matter contrary to your wishes. Oh, blame me not, dear father, nor deem me altogether unworthy of your affection, when I inform you that I am now the wife of Rupert De Lancey, from his home I now write. Oh, deem me not heartless and indifferent to your love for acting in this one instance in disobedience to your commands. Ah! you would not think harshly of me if you knew how many tears, how many hours of wretchedness I endured ere I could resolve to leave my childhood home—how many times I resolved even to sacrifice the love which had become so dear to me, rather than disobey my own dear father and mother. But, alas! I could not resist the pleadings of my fond, foolish heart—I could not.

"We were married at Allantown the last day I saw you, my father, and only this morning I reached my future home. A beautiful and stately home it is, and amid its enjoyments, with my husband so full of gentle, almost womanly tenderness and affection, I should be the happiest being on earth were it not for the thought of my injured parents. Could I know that they still look upon me as their child, still bless and pray for me.

"Ah, withhold not your pardon, my dear, kind parents, do not chide me too severely. I throw myself upon that unwearying patience with which you have hitherto regarded my waywardness, that never-failing love which, alas! I have too

often abused, but which has followed me through all my unworthiness, and by this love I implore your forgiveness as the greatest boon I could receive, and conjure you, my beloved father and mother, to think with pity and kindness upon your erring, But affectionate child,

GERTRUDE."

Poor Mrs. Gray! Her head sank heavily on her husband's pillow ere the fatal letter was half read, and the deep sobs that parted her pale lips and shook her aged frame, told how her maternal heart was lacerated by the undutiful conduct of her daughter. Yet even in that moment the yearning love of the mother triumphed over her own sorrow, and as the thought of the sinfulness of this sad act of disobedience rushed through her mind she raised her clasped hands to heaven, murmuring feebly, but fervently, "forgive her—pardon her in Thy mercy, oh, God! visit not this sin upon her, but in Thy Fatherly pity shield her from sorrow and trial."

From his sick bed, to which this blow confined him for several days longer, the father wrote.

"Unhappy girl! Little can you dream of the misery you have inflicted on our hearts—but reproach is useless. The past cannot be recalled. May you never have cause to repent the rash, unadvised step you have taken, and may God forgive you your fault and the anguish it has caused us as freely as we forgive you; and comfort and sustain you in the trials which I cannot but fear await you. Yet if our prayers can avail no shadow shall ever cross the pathway which now looks so fair before you. For this we will hope, and, above all, that we may yet be united in a better world. Assure yourself of our unabated affection, and receive the blessing of your tender mother in union with my own. In whatever sorrow or evil may come upon you, remember that our love is unchangeably your own, and that our hearts and arms shall ever be open to receive you."

Thus did the parents seek to forget the anguish which her undutiful conduct had caused them, in order that Gertrude might not feel the pang which the withholding of their forgiveness would have occasioned her. But was that sorrow indeed forgotten, or did it so soon yield to consolation? Ah! it is not our purpose, were it even in our power, to portray the feelings which the ingratitude of their daughter awakened.

There was a deeper shade upon the mother's furrowed brow; there was a something of sternness in the father's manner—that sternness which a proud man assumes to hide the grief that may not be banished; there was gloom and anxiety within the abode which had hitherto known cheerfulness and gayety; and even the children's innocent mirth was often checked by their mother, for

it seemed so strange they should be glad and mirthful now, that their aunt, who had once been the very spirit of loveliness, was gone—gone forever.

CHAPTER IV.

BEAUTIFUL indeed was the Southern home of our heroine, and her married life promised to be as happy as love and wealth could make it. The house, a large and spacious one, stood almost at the entrance of the town, in the midst of extensive grounds, which in that sunny clime still retained their beauties of tree and flower: everything within and about the house bore the evidences of a luxurious, but refined taste; and the little boudoir which opened from her own splendid chamber was as fairy-like a room as one would wish to see. Here Gertrude was wont to sit watching eagerly for her handsome and graceful husband as he walked up the long avenue to the house. One evening she had twined a beautiful wreath of autumn's rich flowers, and waiting for the moment when he reached the stately portico of the dwelling, she threw it so dexterously from the window that it fell exactly as she desired around his finely formed head, from which, as was his custom, he had removed his hat as he advanced through the avenue. Oh, how merrily she laughed at his surprise, and how beautiful she looked as she tripped to the staircase to meet him. Rupert thought he had never seen her so lovely; and he stooped to imprint a long kiss on her full, soft lips, and to gaze into the depths of her large, lustrous eyes beaming with gratified affection, ere he said, "I have something to give you in return for your wreath, Gertrude. See!" and he playfully held up her father's letter.

"Oh, that is from my father, I know it is—do give it me, Rupert!" she exclaimed, with such a look of eager distress, that he relinquished his design of teasing her, and handed her the coveted epistle. She wept so long and sadly as she perused it, that he inquired, at length, if it contained any distressing intelligence. "Oh, no—no—my own dear, kind father!" she repeated again and again, as, kissing the signature with wild affection, she surrendered the letter to her husband.

"Well, this is just what I expected; you see they scarcely wonder at your elopement. Not very complimentary to me," he added, somewhat bitterly, but as his eye fell upon the tearful face of his bride he checked himself, and continued in a gay tone, "ah, well! we must trust to time to remove these suspicions; and I can bear them patiently meanwhile as you are now my own—mine forever!"

And so with playful words and caresses he

banished the grief which the remembrance of home had brought to the undutiful daughter, and thus led her to the dinner-table with her fair countenance beaming with smiles, and all the more beautiful from the moisture that still trembled in her soft eyes. Now she was happy, happy as she had ever desired to be; and her letters to her parents expressed this in such glowing, yet evidently sincere language, that it went far to dispel the gloom her absence occasioned; and in the fond persuasion of her felicity forgot the blow she had given to their own.

There were times, indeed, when unpleasant thoughts came to disturb the serenity and cheerfulness of Gertrude. She wondered, sometimes, why with all the grandeur that surrounded her, her neighbors showed themselves no way anxious to form her acquaintance. There were a few persons, it was true, who made calls upon the new resident, but they were not of that kind with whom she would wish to cultivate friendship. Occasionally at public places she came in contact with several families who lived within sight of her abode, but they took no notice of her, save by a look of compassionate interest, which caused Gertrude both surprise and vexation. Nor was it less a subject of astonishment that the gentlemen of the neighborhood paid no attention to De Lancey, who, in the estimation of his fond wife, might challenge admiration wherever he appeared. Once she ventured to express her wonder that her neighbors did not offer even the common civilities usually extended to a stranger; but he interrupted her by asking, in a tone of affectionate reproach, "am I not, then, sufficient company, Gertrude?" and as she replied in the manner her devoted love suggested, she resolved never again to trouble herself or him upon the subject. So she spent most of her time within her pleasant abode, alone with Rupert, finding her world, her society, her happiness in him; or when he was absent, as was often the case, she engaged in some pleasing occupation to divert the tedious hours till his return.

She thus escaped hearing what would have destroyed her unclouded happiness, for De Lancey's character stood no higher in the estimation of his townsmen than in Mr. Gray's. He was, in fact, known only as a profligate, idle young man, who, on first appearing at Springville, might have attracted public attention by his singularly prepossessing manners and gentlemanly appearance, had not his dissipated habits soon rendered him odious and contemptible in the eyes of the respectable citizens. His skill at the gaming-table enabled him to make a dashing appearance, and it was generally thought that he was becoming wealthy. During one of his professional tours through the neighboring states, it was found that

he had written to a friend to rent for him a house situated in the fashionable part of the town, and when, soon after, everything requisite for an elegant dwelling arrived from the North, it began to be suspected that his intention was to settle permanently in Alabama. This was rendered certain when shortly afterward he returned, bringing his lovely and graceful bride, whose appearance attracted universal admiration; and great was the compassion expressed for her misfortune in having become the wife of such a character as Rupert De Lancey. The kindly feelings of some of the ladies prompted them at first to make the acquaintance of the fair young bride; but they were deterred by the abhorrence with which they could not but regard her husband; and others, with whom this would have weighed but little, in consideration of the elegant style in which the newly-married pair lived, hesitated to form any acquaintance with persons of whose origin they were ignorant. The account which De Lancey had given of his noble descent was generally discredited; and thus, some through contempt of his character, others through a dread of demeaning themselves by associating with persons of low birth, all kept aloof from their splendid abode.

But of all this Gertrude was as yet ignorant. She was indeed astonished on learning accidentally that the house in which they dwelt did not belong to them, as she had understood it to be a portion of the vast estate of which Rupert had frequently spoken: but a second thought suggested that this was very fortunate, as perhaps after a time he would remove to a more agreeable neighborhood.

When the Christmas holidays were past, during which Gertrude could not help sometimes missing the familiar forms with whom she had been wont to enjoy that festal season, she spent most of the time in devising and executing various little gifts for all the dear ones at home, which it was her intention to send early in the spring, so as to reach them by her birth day; and Rupert entered so warmly into her feelings, giving her freely the money requisite for her purpose, and even pressing her to make her little gifts handsomer and more costly than she at first intended, that the proud wife almost fancied him an angel of love and kindness; and in the exuberance of her blissful emotions would wonder if anything *could* ever happen to trouble or disquiet her.

Happy Gertrude! Enjoy thy brief, bright dream!

The presents were sent, and their unexpected arrival joyfully and gratefully acknowledged; and now Gertrude began to feel at a loss how to dispose of her time; but she won from De Lancey a kind of half promise that he would

take her to spend a few weeks with her parents sometime during the ensuing summer, and this pleasant anticipation gave her a new feeling of happiness. She would read over and again her mother's letter, dwelling on each line that told of the emotions she felt in receiving so many tokens of the affection of her absent child; she imagined how surprised each one was on beholding their respective mementoes, and could hear the joyous shouts of her little nephews and nieces, as described by her sister, at getting so many pretty things from their dear, good aunt: she thought how delighted they would be to see her again, what pleasant hours they should pass, and that, perhaps, one of the children would accompany her home, it would be such good company when Rupert was out. But still more happy did she feel as she read for the hundredth time every word concerning her husband, for it was evident that their former opinion was giving way to one more favorable, and, as she imagined, more just; and it was a proud thought for the loving wife that her idolized one was, at last, properly appreciated by her family.

When the summer's beautiful blossoms lent their fragrant breath to add another charm to her luxurious abode, she went among her favorite plants tending and admiring them, as gay as the little songsters that flitted through the shady branches that waved around her, and each day was welcomed as bringing her nearer the wished-for period of her journey. But she was disappointed in this fond hope, for Rupert, who indeed had no intention of realizing it, met her earnest, tearful entreaties with many arguments to prove that it was utterly impossible for him to leave home, and though she wept and pouted at the disappointment, she was obliged to resign herself to it. Neither could she induce him to name any definite period to which she could look forward. "At Christmas, Rupert! surely we could go at Christmas—oh, it would be so delightful to spend it with them—say that we will go then, and I shall be willing to wait, even though it is such a long time!" she would coaxingly exclaim; but he would answer, laughing, that he would not run the risk of disappointing her so dreadfully again, by naming any specified time; and when she repeated her entreaties, despite of his laughing denials, he at length became impatient, and chided her for the unreasonableness of her desire, till fearful of provoking him too much she learned to stifle her earnest wish in the recesses of her throbbing heart, and wait in silent anticipation the period when her longing desires could be gratified.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER Christmas—the second of Gertrude De Lancey's married life, and we find her again

in her Southern home. Her cheek has lost most of its soft, rich bloom, and there is a light shadow on the brow that, a year ago, was sunny and unclouded as a child's. What can have placed it there? She has been disappointed in her anticipation of a visit to her dear old home, but that is past; and, though deeply grieved and pained at the time, yet it is not sufficient cause for the great change in her appearance. Alas! Gertrude has other, deeper sources of sorrow. She is no longer ignorant of her husband's real situation, and to one brought up in a community where gambling was held in unmeasured contempt and abhorrence, the knowledge was fraught with bitter agony. At first she strove to disbelieve the humiliating fact—then to banish it altogether from her mind—but the effort was vain; and with many dismal forebodings she resigned herself to the life of anxiety and self-humiliation which was now before her. De Lancey's manners were still kind and gentle, but he was now frequently absent from home; and she had learned to tremble with fear during these long absences, for she could not forget by how precarious a tenure they held the comforts by which they were surrounded.

But at length a little comforter was given her in her sorrowful loneliness; and as the young mother bent over the cradle of her first born, watching its peaceful slumbers, she had many bright dreams of the time when her baby-girl would be a little companion during her otherwise lonely hours, beguiling them by her innocent prattle and playful caresses. And now, if not as gay and lively as of yore, she was happy, tranquilly happy, for her maternal cares kept her employed during most of the time that would else have dragged by in gloomy and harrassing reveries, and she had something to hope for, something to look forward to in the future.

But the New Year brought a sad change to Gertrude. Her husband was scarcely ever with her, and his manner was changed, so cold and indifferent, that her fond heart felt chilled; and it was a relief when left alone with her babe no longer she awaited his coming with impatience, and sprang with rapturous eagerness to welcome him home; but rather cowered and shrank like a frightened bird, when she heard his foot fall upon the stairs. Oh! 'twas a sad, sad change!

As the winter waned slowly away, things became yet more gloomy. Rupert's luck changed, and the money and estate gained by previous good fortune were risked with all a gamester's recklessness, and lost. His slaves followed, then his splendid equipage, and nought remained but the sumptuous furniture of the house where he resided. On a stormy night in March he returned home at a late hour. The infant had

been fretful for some hours, and the weary and exhausted mother had just succeeded in lulling it to repose. She turned from the cradle over which she still bent anxiously as she heard her husband's step, and she started back with uncontrollable terror as she met the fierce glance of his large black eyes, rendered more startling by the ashy paleness of his face, around which the long, raven hair fell in damp, disordered masses.

"Gertrude," he said, in a tone deep and husky, "Gertrude, I am a lost man—ruined, beggared! I have lost everything—even the furniture of this house is no longer ours. There is but one way to escape from poverty and wretchedness—aye, from starvation. And that is for you to write to your father for the money we need. Come, can you do it to-night?"

The wife was standing motionless on the spot where she stood terrified at his entrance: her face was as deadly pale as if no blood had ever flowed beneath the transparent skin, and her eyes were fixed upon him with a wild, startled gaze. She seemed not to have heard or understood him.

"Can you write for the money to-night?" he repeated, in loud, angry tones.

"No—to-night nor never!" was the calm, but firm response. "I will not wring my father's heart by informing him of the early fulfilment of his sad prediction. Let the things go—what matters it?—let them go."

"Yes, let them go," sneered the husband. "And then, brave one, what then? Starve or beg, which shall be your choice?"

"Either. For myself I can starve—life has no longer any charms for me—for my child I can beg."

"Come, I want none of this silly prating. The matter is will you write to your father or not? If he were an honest man he would have sent your dowry long ago."

"You know, Rupert De Lancey," replied the wife, with a sad, but calm look and tone, "you knew when you entered my happy home that you could expect no portion with me. You knew it well: but disclaimed any wish to obtain a dollar with your chosen bride."

"Aye, the usual language of love and courtship, but your father as a man of the world knows better. However, I have not asked for it, nor thought of it till now, and if I had no immediate necessity for it I should not press for my right. But I want money, this money is mine by right, and I will have it. I must have it, and that quickly. Will you write for it, or shall I?"

"Great God! Be merciful—do not let my senses leave me!" exclaimed the poor wife,

raising her clasped hands wildly to her forehead as she leaned heavily against the bedstead by which she stood, almost overpowered by the brutal words and tone of the monster before her.

After a few moments she spoke again, but calmly. "I cannot write as you wish, Rupert. I know, indeed, that my father could spare no sum sufficient for your need. He is not affluent as you know, and has my sister's family to support. But I have jewels which will bring a good deal, and although it is hard to part with my dear father's gifts, as most of them are, I suppose they must be sacrificed."

Had Gertrude not been too pre-occupied with her sad thoughts, she might have remarked the peculiar smile, or rather sneer of De Lancey at the word "jewels." But he spoke not; and she drew a small key from her pocket and unlocked her private drawer to bring forth the treasures. What was her astonishment to find them missing?

"Oh, we have been robbed, Rupert," she said, hastily. "But no: let me look again:" and with desperate haste she re-examined the drawer. They were gone.

"How can it be?" she began, but as she looked up to her husband, she stopped, then grasping his arm, exclaimed breathlessly, "oh, Rupert! you have not taken them—say you have not taken them!"

"Well, and if I do, will the words bring back the baubles?"

"I only want to know if they are sacrificed already; if you have sold them!"

"Well, if I have, who had a better right? They are not worth the fuss you are making. You would sell them now—what is the difference?"

"I would not sell all—not all!" murmured the poor creature, as she wrung her hands with frantic agony. "There was a miniature of my mother—what did you do with that? Tell me where I can get it, and I will bless you forever."

"Ha! I could not do that if you were to offer me a far higher reward."

"Oh, what is that miniature to any one but me. I don't want the setting—they can keep the pearls, but I want the likeness—the lock of hair enclosed. Oh, if I only knew who won it from you, surely he would give it to me! My mother! my own dear, darling mother!" and the unhappy woman sobbed in bitter, heart-crushing anguish.

"Considering that with so little hesitation you broke her heart, you are very much concerned now about her likeness," said the heartless husband, as he coolly turned from the door and left the house.

Long did the unhappy wife remain as he had left her, his cruel words ringing in her ears, and

her heart torn with emotions of love and remorse as she thought of her deserted parents. A last wild gush of tears, she fell upon her knees beside her sleeping infant, and pressed its baby hand to her throbbing brow, as if the touch of innocence might lull the fever burning there. "Oh, mother—mother—I am rightly punished!" she sobbed again and again; and then, as she looked upon her own child, she started with a sudden fear that it might one day imitate her sin, and inflict the same wound upon her heart that she had made upon her loving mother's. Oh! as the thought almost maddened her, how keenly did she realize the misery of which she had been the guilty cause; and as she writhed in agony that was terrible to endure, fervent and penitent were the prayers and supplications for pardon that rose to heaven from her crushed and humbled spirit. It was nearly daybreak when the miserable wife rose from her lowly posture, and faint and exhausted she fell upon her couch to take a brief slumber; little thinking it was the last sleep she should take beneath the shelter of a comfortable home.

Early in the morning De Lancey returned, and with him came the man who had won the furniture of that once happy dwelling. He had agreed to pay the balance of rent due on the house, and now entered as its master; and though with much show of liberality he begged Mrs. De Lancey to consider it still as her own, until she should be pleasantly situated elsewhere, she with mild dignity refused his proffered kindness, and selecting the things she had brought with her to Alabama, and giving them in charge to her sole remaining servant, took her babe in her arms, and calmly desired her husband to lead the way wherever they were to go.

Alas! he had been unable to provide any place for their future abode. He had neither character nor friends to uphold him in this crisis—his means of subsistence had failed—and his condition was more pitiable than that of the veriest street beggar.

CHAPTER VI.

AN untenanted negro hut on the outskirts of the town afforded the only place of shelter which he could find; and here did the delicately reared Gertrude enter with her frail, helpless infant. A broken stool furnished a seat, for which in her trembling, wearied state she was thankful; and when the servant (whose regard for her poor mistress had led her to partake of her fallen condition) had lighted a fire, for which, happily, ample material was found around the hovel, Gertrude despatched her with some of her costly clothing, that she might be able to purchase something for their noontide meal, and a mattress and

coverlets for the night. Very soon the servant returned, bringing a bundle of articles with which to make an humble bed; and also food which she now set about preparing; and when the sad meal was finished, Rupert went out to endeavor to find some more comfortable abode. He had not yet lost every feeling of affection for the poor creature, upon whom he had brought this load of misery, and their present suffering roused the latent emotions of his better nature into life. He pressed a kiss upon the cold cheek of Gertrude ere he departed, bidding her not to lose her spirits, for they should not be long in that dreary place.

Gertrude spent the afternoon in tears, holding her babe, her only comfort, close to her heart; but it was neither distress nor poverty that caused those tears to flow. The cruel words of her husband on the previous night still sounded on her ears, and were fearfully re-echoed by the reproving voice of conscience. As night approached she went to the door to see if her husband was returning, he was nowhere to be seen; not a sound broke the stillness around, save the startling screech of an owl in a neighboring forest; she was destitute of everything; utterly miserable; while within a few hundred yards were happy families in cheerful, comfortable homes. She looked up to the heavens as if for pity and comfort, but no smiling clouds of sunset dyes met her tearful gaze; no rays of amber light pierced through the surrounding gloom to revive her hopes, that the darkness which enveloped her might pass away; a heavy, leaden pall shrouded the skies from view, and with a more oppressive sense of her wretchedness she turned again to the miserable tenement that had received her. There are times when the overburdened spirit feels a strange, mysterious sympathy with nature; when a leaf falling with a sighing sound to the earth awakes an echo of sadness in the lonely bosom; when the mind that might take a happy tone from the sight of anything gay or cheerful, becomes yet more gloomy and dispirited if the skies are overclouded, or the branches of the leafless trees rustle mournfully in the chilling blast. Thus it was with Gertrude. As she resumed her unsteady seat not a ray of hope illumed her darkened spirit; she thought not of the joys of the past, nor the hopes that might brighten the future; all was absorbed in her present destitute condition; and with the apathy of despair she awaited whatever else might be in store for her.

It was late when De Lancey returned. She knew by his haggard, sorrowful look that he had been unsuccessful; and not a word was spoken through that long, gloomy night, though neither slept. Gertrude held her babe in her arms,

pressed tightly to her bosom, as if she could thus shelter its delicate form; for the chilling night wind swept with a moaning sound through the disjointed doors and windows of the hut, and along the cold floor beneath their miserable pallet—recking little of the shiver it sent through forms accustomed to beds of down.

The next day the faithful servant went to her mistress from whom Gertrude had hired her as nurse to her precious babe; and so pathetically deplored the situation of her poor young lady, that her mistress gratified her by allowing her for the present at least, to remain with Mrs. De Lancey, and endeavor to mitigate the distress of her situation, by relieving her of the domestic cares to which she was unaccustomed.

A week had passed heavily away since the sad removal of the De Lanceys, and they yet inhabited the dreary hovel in which they had first taken refuge. In one corner of the room sat the faithful negress, with her head bowed upon her knees, crying bitterly. On a rude table, which she had constructed from the lumber around the hut on her first day of service within its tottering walls, lay the lovely remains of the cherished babe; alas! too delicate a flower to have been transplanted from its beautiful home to this bleak, cheerless abode. Beside it sat the mother, looking upon her heart's treasure, while large tears coursed down her marble cheeks, and fell thickly on the sweet face on which she gazed. Weep, sorrowful one! weep in thy loneliness and anguish—thy tears, thy sobs cannot recall the emancipated spirit to reanimate the lovely remains on which thy wistful gaze is fixed so tenderly. Yes, weep! for with the light of those dear eyes the last gleam of happiness has departed from thy lonely bosom. Hopeless and suffering one; thine indeed is a bitter cup, and thou art drinking to the very dregs; happy if thy accumulated sorrows atone for the error of thy girlhood, which is now ever before thee.

The funeral was over—that sad, sad funeral—and Gertrude, with a fresh pang at her heart, turned from the little mound in the lonely forest which covered her angel babe, and thought of the family vault in the old church-yard where her forefathers calmly reposed; where she had seen one of her little nieces deposited, while the voice of prayer arose to hallow the spot to which the loved one was entrusted to await the dawning of the glad day of resurrection. “It is just, oh, Father!” she murmured, “it is just that I should suffer; and though I weep, let me not rebel against Thy will.”

She had not written home since the New Year came with such an appalling change; she could not while misfortunes were thickening around her: but now she sent a letter, sorrowful and

plaintive as the faint murmur of the dying, and she told of the sickness and death of her infant, but spoke not of any other trouble—this was enough; and she would not shadow her parents' tranquil home by the knowledge of her miserable condition.

Listless and indifferent to everything became now the bereaved mother. It was evident that her health, which had suffered from so many trials rapidly succeeding each other, was now completely gone. Her commiserating attendant thought that every hour her poor mistress failed; but she never complained nor seemed sensible of her rapidly declining state, rendered hopeless by the total want of the little comforts and attentions requisite to one in her situation. She would sit silent and abstracted for hours together, but the tears that frequently flowed showed that bitter thoughts were stirring within.

One evening De Lancey brought her a letter. She kissed the well known writing, her father's writing, as she received it, but when she turned it to break the seal a loud scream escaped her, and with a look of such agony as her husband had never before witnessed, she held it toward him. In his joy on receiving it at the post-office, for he knew if anything could comfort her it would be a letter from her parents, he had not noticed the black seal it bore! Hastily he broke it, and as he read his face wore a sadder expression, and he gently pressed the hand cold and trembling of his stricken wife; but he could not inform her of the contents.

"My mother—I know it is my mother!" she gasped at length, and when his silence confirmed her mournful surmise, she fell lifeless at his feet, while a thick stream of blood issued from her pallid lips. Long did the hapless woman lay in that death-like swoon, while her husband bent over her in passionate grief, and the weeping negress applied such simple restoratives as were at hand; entreating him at the same time to bring a doctor to see her poor, dear young lady; but he would not leave her until consciousness was again restored, and on learning his intention the meek sufferer begged him not to go. "It would be of no use, Rupert; the shock was too great, but I am better now."

After a time she read the letter, read it again and again, though every time with renewed grief, but there was a melancholy comfort in reading of the last moments of her dear though injured parent; of her calm, quiet death; above all in perusing the affectionate messages which she had dictated for her absent child. Sweet and tender were they, consoling to the poor, lacerated heart of her who now strove to imagine the look and tone with which they had been uttered by the dear departed, even while she wept anew to

think how unworthy she had shown herself of such unalterable, undying affection.

CHAPTER VII.

It was late on the afternoon of the third day from that which had brought the fatal letter, that an elderly gentleman of noble, though grief-stricken appearance, reached the dreary abode in which lay Gertrude De Lancey on her death-bed. He paused as his eye scanned the miserable tenement, but subduing as if by a strong effort his feelings, he gently pushed open the door. If the outside view had seemed wretched, the sight that now met his gaze was appalling, and he could scarcely nerve himself to beckon the servant to follow him as he turned noiselessly from the door. But the occupant of the poor pallet on the floor had marked his entrance, and endeavored to raise her feeble form, and now as the light streamed upon him as he turned from the narrow entrance, a wild though feeble scream of joy reached his ears. He paused irresolute, "father—dear father—dear, dear father!" she repeated, in a tone which thrilled through his soul, and finding it was too late for a cautious announcement of his arrival as he had meditated, he knelt beside that humble couch, and as he bowed his face to hers tears gushed from his eyes, and the manly frame trembled like a fragile leaf.

It was indeed Mr. Gray who had thus fortunately arrived in time to soothe the last moments of his beloved child. Her last sad letter had reached him immediately after he had despatched the tidings of her mother's decease; and apprehensive of the effect of such an announcement on a breaking heart such as her letter denoted, he had at once set out for Springville, with the hope that his visit might rouse her from too great indulgence of her sorrow. He had inquired for her at her former splendid residence, that home which she had so minutely described in many of her letters; and there learned the dreadful change that had taken place. With a heart filled with dismal forebodings he had sought the hut to which he had been directed, and here in a state of destitution from which he would have hastened to relieve the veriest outcast, he found his once beautiful and high-spirited daughter. One look sufficed to show that she was dying, and though nearly overpowered by the sudden shock his feelings had sustained, he yet blessed the Hand that had conducted him to that gloomy spot, thus affording the poor sufferer the unexpected comfort of his presence during her last hours.

Through the long hours of that mournful night Mr. Gray kept vigil beside the death-bed. Gertrude seldom spoke, and then only in tones of

anguish to implore his pardon for her undutifulness. When the morning sunbeams shone into the room, revealing with startling distinctness its wretched state, Gertrude was in a deep, lethargic slumber, from which she suddenly started, and reached her wasted hand to her father with a happy smile. "She has pardoned me, father; mother has forgiven me, she calls me to a new home, where we shall all be happy yet—oh, how happy!" With a slight sigh she fell back upon her pillow—her father bent over her eagerly to catch the last faint accents she might utter, but the lips moved not again—she was dead.

Who might tell what were then the feelings of the bereaved father, as crouched in a corner of the miserable room, he imagined all that its now unconscious tenant must have suffered since she had taken refuge within its cheerful walls; when he remembered the sportive gaiety that had once made his beautiful daughter the charm of every circle, and thought over the varied trials that had wrung her young heart since he parted with her not two years before! Two years! What had she not endured in that brief space of time?

Rousing himself at length, he sent the faithful servant, whose grief for her dear young mistress was most touching to witness, to engage the proper persons to perform the last sad offices for the deceased; and then returned to muse beside the death-bed. While thus sadly occupied, a hasty step broke the solemn silence, and De Lancey, who had been absent since the morning of the previous day, entered, exclaiming hastily, "come, Gertrude, we will now leave this hut, and be again"—but he paused as he reached the bed, and stooped to kiss the lips now sealed in death; a low moan burst from him, then he hastily and wildly placed his hand upon the motionless heart and the icy forehead of his wife, and, at last, when he could no longer doubt the terrible fact that death had been there in his absence, with a wild scream he threw himself beside the corpse in an agony of grief and remorse. "My precious, my beautiful one, I have murdered thee!" he repeated, in frantic tones, clasping the dear remains to his bosom, as if he thought by his close embrace and passionate cries to recall the departed spirit. Mr. Gray had felt naturally indignant toward the man who had lured his child from his comfortable home and numerous friends, to endure the loneliness, the mortification and miseries of a gambler's wife: but he could not behold without pity the wretched being who showed how deep was his love for the partner of his evil lot, even though the unkindness engendered by his ill course of life had done most toward making the fragile wreck before him: of which, however, the father

was happily ignorant. For some time De Lancey seemed unconscious of his presence. At last he looked up, but he shrank before the compassionating look of the parent of his injured wife, as if he beheld instead a stern minister of justice.

"I lured your daughter from her happy home—I blighted all her prospects, and wedded her to a life of misery. Wretched, wretched man—why did I so heartlessly abuse the only one I ever loved—the one whose love blessed me, despite my unworthiness?"

Moved by his evident distress, Mr. Gray forbore to add his reproaches to the sting of conscience; but after a time inquired why he was about to leave the hovel, and whither he had purposed going. De Lancey started up and glanced wildly around the room. A new tale of guilt was now poured into the ear of his startled listener. The physician whom two days before he had called in to attend his wife, had been unable to find any disease which could have reduced her so low, and had accordingly advised him to remove her as soon as practicable from Springville; change of scene being the only resource that gave even a hope of her recovery. Tortured by this reflection, Rupert tried every means to obtain the money requisite for this end, but without success; and at last forged a check for the sum required upon a gentleman who was absent from the city, and whom he judged would not return until his few preparations should have been made for leaving. Once out of Springville, he thought he could easily elude pursuit. While hastening homeward occupied with these reflections, he met an old associate, who invited him to come and take a cheerful glass with him; apprehensive of exciting suspicions by refusing, on the plea of haste, he assented with seeming pleasure. Seated by a table in a private room of the restaurant to which they had directed their course, De Lancey soon grew weary of feigning attention to his friend, in whose lively conversation he could scarcely participate; and when at length an hour had passed, and the latter gave no indication of being willing to leave, De Lancey abruptly rose to retire. To this the other strenuously objected; Rupert, conscious of the value of every passing moment, persisted that he must go; and finally irritated at the pertinacious opposition of his companion, gave him a sudden blow which felled him to the ground. In falling his head struck against the table, a stream of blood gushed from the wound, and he lay senseless at De Lancey's feet. Terrified at what he had done, the latter's first impulse was to ring the bell, and summon assistance to the injured man: but a second thought suggested the possibility of escape before his new crime could be discovered; and leaving by a back door, unseen

by any one, he hurriedly departed to the hut, from which he had now another motive for removing as soon as possible.

"Unhappy man!" exclaimed Mr. Gray, as his son-in-law, in almost incoherent language, rapidly informed him of these dreadful events, "unhappy man! What have you done? Blessed be God who has spared her this last blow! My poor, poor child!"

All that now occurred to the distressed father, was to get the miserable culprit out of the way before the officers of justice should appear in search of him. How could he bear to have the husband of his darling child arrested on a charge of forgery, perhaps also of murder, even in the presence of her dear remains? He represented this to Rupert, and at length prevailed on him to fly, taking with him the money he had obtained; Mr. Gray promising that should he not be suspected of the assault upon his friend, he would pay the sum he had procured at bank, and thus preclude a pursuit of him on a criminal charge. De Lancey embraced for the last time the cold remains of his still beloved wife, and hurriedly departed.

Soon after the negress returned with the persons she had procured to prepare the corpse for the grave, and Mr. Gray, leaving the precious charge in her care, went out to make arrangements for the funeral. Finding it impossible to remove the deceased to his own home, as he had at first intended, he caused a grave to be dug in the cemetery of Springville, and having also had the infant removed from its lonely grave in the wild forest, that it might repose on its mother's tomb, he returned sadly to the hovel. Here he found everything prepared—his lovely daughter lay within the narrow coffin, but the lid had not been fastened, that the father might have the mournful satisfaction of gazing on those dear features, until the arrival of the hearse and carriage he had ordered. While awaiting these he paced the room slowly, oppressed with painful emotions, while the faithful servant sat at the foot of the coffin, looking upon her departed mistress, while large tears trickled down her cheeks, and suppressed sobs shook her frame.

Suddenly the door was thrown violently open, and two constables entered in search of De Lancey. One in his eagerness rudely seized Mr. Gray, exclaiming, "here he is!" but the other, who knew the object of his pursuit personally, bade him desist; and when the aged man turned toward them both stood in silence, awe-struck by his mournful aspect.

"Forbear this violence," he exclaimed, in a solemn tone. "Have some respect for the dead!"

The men, for the first time, noticed the coffin,

and apologizing for their noisy entrance, explained the cause of their appearance. The gentleman in whose name De Lancey had forged the check had returned; and on going to the bank to deposit some money had learned the fraud perpetrated. The description given by the clerk immediately fixed suspicion on De Lancey; he was traced to the house where his last crime had been committed; the unfortunate sufferer by it was still in a state of insensibility occasioned by his great loss of blood; but no doubt remained on the minds of those who were in the house that De Lancey gave the blow, for all had seen them enter the room together, and Rupert's unseen departure of course furnished an additional ground for suspicion. The police were immediately on the alert, and while some were despatched to his customary places of resort, the two above mentioned proceeded to the hovel, in which he was known to have of late resided.

Finding their search for him there fruitless, one stationed himself by the window to watch for his appearance, while the other started out to renew the search. He shortly returned with the information that the unfortunate man had been arrested on board a steamboat, on which he had taken passage for New Orleans. He had also learned that the man whom De Lancey had injured in the restaurant had been restored to sensibility, and on being questioned whether De Lancey had inflicted the wound, testified in the affirmative by signs, being unable to speak. There was no hope of his recovery from the injury he had sustained.

The two constables, with an appearance of much sympathy, expressed their regret to Mr. Gray for having intruded on his sorrow, and gazing for a moment in silent admiration on the beautiful face of her who slept so peacefully in that slumber, which happily for her knew no rude awaking, departed noiselessly from the hut. Relieved by their departure, Mr. Gray sank down beside the coffin, and his varied feelings found vent in a gush of tears. One comfort only he had now that Gertrude, his own darling Gertrude, was unconscious of this last blow, that she had not lived to witness the arrest of her husband as a murderer!

In a carriage with the poor negress, the only friend of that once proud and admired being, the father followed the remains of his child and her babe to their last resting place. The funeral rites were performed, the coffins lowered into their narrow bed and covered from the sight of the living; and the bereaved parent turned with a heart oppressed with anguish from the grave of the erring daughter and ill-fated wife, to seek his far distant home.

MRS. MORGAN'S MAINE LAW.

BY JONES SMITH, JR.

MRS. MORGAN'S husband was an excellent workman, and had the best wages, but he would drink, and, like most men of his class, when in liquor generally beat his children and sometimes his wife.

Mrs. Morgan was a notable woman, and loved her husband in spite of all, but after years of patient forbearance, she came to the conclusion that Jimmy Morgan, as she called him, should stop drinking, whether or no. In other words she resolved on a private Maine law of her own.

The occasion was one day when Jimmy came home to dinner, half tipsy, which always happened when he stopped at the tavern on his way; and he did this, on an average, about twice a week.

"Now you Morgan," she said, as soon as he entered, "you've been at the whiskey bottle again. You needn't deny it. I know it by your looks. And by your breath too—go away, you nasty beast—how dare you try to kiss me when you've been drinking."

Jimmy had essayed this matrimonial caress, hoping it would conciliate the gude-wife; but finding his purpose foiled, he stood upon his dignity.

"Hoity toity," he said, "how we put on airs. Give us some dinner, and don't sulk."

Mrs. Morgan did not often get roused, but she was now: she put her arms akimbo and answered,

"Not a mouthful of dinner do you get in this house, to-day, nor any other day till you can come home sober. So the sooner you're off the better."

The half tipsy husband looked at her in amazement. For a moment he thought of enforcing his will, as he had often done before, but whether he had not drunk quite enough to rouse his courage, or whether the blazing eyes of his helpmate frightened him, he turned, after a little hesitation, and left the house.

Of course he went straight to the tavern, as Mrs. Morgan rather expected he would. And of course, when night came, he was led home thoroughly inebriated, as she rather wished he would.

He had just sufficient reason left to wonder at the extraordinary care, with which his wife, after assisting to undress him, fucked him in bed. But

this, and everything else was soon forgotten in a stupified sleep.

She waited until satisfied that he was entirely insensible, when she proceeded to sew the offender up in the sheets, exactly as if he had been a mummy. The stitches were not small, but they were taken with trebled thread: and she knew they would hold, especially as he could now use neither legs nor arms. Once or twice he grunted, as if about to awake, but she stopped a moment at such times.

At last the proceeding was complete. And now she brought forth a cart-whip, which she had borrowed, that afternoon, from a neighbor.

"Now, Jimmy Morgan," she said, apostrophizing him, "I'll cure you of your beastly habits, or—please God!—I'll whip you till you'll be sore for a month."

Down came the lash, as vigorously as her brawny arm could lay it on; again, again, and yet again; it seemed as if she was never going to stop. And very soon, the offender, roused from his stupor, saw what it was, and began to beg for mercy.

"Not till you've promised to leave off drinking," was the answer, and the blows descended more vigorously than ever. "Swear never to taste liquor again!"

"Oh! you'll kill me—you'll kill me——"

"No, it will do you good. To think how drunk you were, ten minutes ago, and now to see you rolling about so lively—never tell me, Jimmy Morgan, that I'm killing you, after that."

"Mercy, mercy, mercy," roared the criminal. "How can you, Polly, use your own husband so?"

"I can and I will." And another shower of blows descended. "Halloo as much as you like, for it will do you good; only, I can tell you one thing, it will not rouse the neighbors. I told them what I was going to do if you ever came home drunk again. Have you had enough yet? Will you promise at once, or are you going to hold out still?"

"Oh, oh, oh," groaned the helpless husband, twisting and turning in every direction, but unable to escape the cataract of blows, "oh, oh, oh."

"Will you promise? You'd better do it quick," resumed his inexorable spouse, "or I'll beat you

to a jelly. These six years I've borne your drunkenness, but I'll bear it no longer. I've tried coaxing, I've tried everything, and now I'm trying whipping. You've beaten me often enough, and I'm paying you back. Promise at once, the quicker the better, for I'll not let you up till you do, even if it keeps me here all night, and you're sick for a year afterward."

It was a good while before the criminal gave in. He thought his wife would tire out at last, but when the castigator had proceeded for some time; and he saw no symptoms of either fatigue or relenting, he was compelled to succumb.

"I'll swear, I'll swear," he said, at last, "I'll do anything. Only let me up. That's a dear, good Polly. Oh! Lord, don't whip me any more, for I've said I'd swear. Oh, oh!"

Mrs. Morgan gave him three or four sound outs more, to "make assurance doubly sure,"

before she administered the oath, which she did, at last, with the Bible in her hands, completing the ceremony by making him kiss the book.

From that night Jimmy Morgan was never known to taste liquor. He told his neighbors that he had been so sick, after his last spree, that he had resolved to join the temperance society; but he did not tell them what had made him ill. Mrs. Morgan, too, kept the secret, nursing him through his bruises, which were neither few nor slight. However, as she said to herself, "desperate diseases require desperate remedies;" and so she never repented of the medicine she had administered, even though her husband did not earn a dollar for three weeks.

A word more, and our tale is done. And that word is its moral. Perhaps other wives might work cures as miraculous, if they would try Mrs. MORGAN'S MAINE LAW.

THAT INDIAN JAR.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

"WHAT a happy woman you must be!" said Mrs. Penleigh to her friend, Mrs. Spigley, as the two met at a celebrated auction. "There is your husband ready to buy everything, while I can hardly persuade Mr. Penleigh to give things a second look."

"Don't mention it," returned Mrs. Spigley, with a face of comic distress, "the very name of an auction causes me to shudder nervously. 'If you knew half my troubles, you would pity my sad fate.'"

"I would be very glad to share it," replied Mrs. Penleigh, with an incredulous smile, "there!" she exclaimed, as the auctioneer's voice became quicker and louder, "he is actually bidding for that beautiful vase that I had set my heart upon; and he will get it too," she added, in a tone of disappointment, "I cannot get Mr. Penleigh to bid for anything."

Mrs. Spigley, being inconveniently short for a crowded assembly, raised herself up on tip-toe to take a survey of the proceedings; and then, much to her friend's astonishment, exclaimed energetically,

"For mercy's sake! will nobody stop the man? I cannot catch his eye, and he is bidding with the greatest eagerness for that immense cracked jug, yclept Indian jar. I am sick of the very sight of Chinese tea-drinkings, and all the but-terflies, and monsters that seem crowding to the banquet. I can scarcely wade through my dressing-room now for all the mandarins that block up the passage, and my dreams at night are full of all sorts of horrors."

"How do you know that it is cracked?" inquired Mrs. Penleigh, giving full vent to her amusement at this catalogue of troubles.

"Because," rejoined her companion, "Mr. Spigley takes as kindly to cracked jars, disjointed couches, and ill-used chairs, as he does to living samples of other people's cruelty or neglect. To be unfortunate is equivalent with him to being deserving; and a dilapidated piece of furniture is as tenderly cared-for as though it were endowed with the powers of feeling. Our mansion is a complete hospital for the maimed and diseased creations of cabinet-makers and upholsterers."

"It is very easy to talk so," replied her friend, laughing, "every one says that it is as good as a

museum, and to that I can testify from my own experience."

"I do not agree with you," replied Mrs. Spigley, "it is as *bad* as a museum, without being as *good*; and reminds me of nothing more forcibly than the baby-house which delighted my youthful years. There headless, armless, and trunkless dolls dragged on a miserable existence—there unending riots seemed to have broken in doors and windows, and demolished tables and chairs—there unhappy animals bewailed the loss of limb—and there picture-books were like the man in 'the house that Jack built,' 'all tattered and torn.' I sometimes think that our mangled curiosities must be the ghosts of those unfortunate inmates, who have risen, in another form, to reproach me for my cruelty."

"I should think," returned her friend, "that these 'mangled curiosities,' as you call them, would be worth a fortune."

"They *cost* a fortune," replied Mrs. Spigley, "but I always find that when you buy, things are very dear—and when you sell, very cheap."

"Well," returned Mrs. Penleigh, still incredulous, "I think that it is very pleasant to have a husband so inclined. I wish that Mr. Penleigh were so, for I have a perfect passion for knick-knacks."

"Your 'passion' would soon subside if you found yourself wearing to a shadow in following him about as I do Mr. Spigley. Were it not for my restraining presence, he would probably have the entire contents of every house he enters carted to his own, or grouped around the doors. I am obliged to keep an eye upon him; but very much to my own disturbance, he not unfrequently misunderstands my signs, and bids all the faster for things that I wish at least a thousand miles off."

Mrs. Spigley's quick eye now detected the gentleman about to make himself more than usually ridiculous; and she broke off abruptly to call him to order. This accomplished, she resumed her discourse.

"Mr. Spigley appears to possess a sort of instinct that keeps him always informed of every auction that is about to take place, and there is no need to inquire: 'where was Roderick then?' As a proof of the delights I enjoy, I will give you an instance. My mother was one of those

old-fashioned housekeepers who imagine that everything they possess is infinitely superior to anything that can be procured now-a-days. From top to bottom the house was furnished like that of

"A fine old old English gentleman,
All of the olden school."

"Heavy carved bedsteads, with their unwieldy proportions, and dark hangings, that seemed fit nestling places for all those dreadful goblins, and mysterious spectres that haunt our childhood—spidery-looking tables, with cruel corners that seem made for no earthly purpose but to bump one's head against, and claw feet always extended to entrap the unwary—spiteful sofas that roll one off when one gets asleep upon them—and ugly-tempered chairs that will not bend a single inch to accommodate you—these were some of the household gods to which my mother clung with an affection passing the love of woman. With the knocks and tumbles I had so often received from them still fresh in my memory, it is not to be supposed that my feelings toward them were very tender; and when I entered the houses of my companions, and saw things so much more reasonable-looking, and fit for use, I unqualifiedly pronounced them 'rub-bish,' and worked hard to bring my mother over to my own views. But she remained inflexible, and I really began to despair. I was afraid too that any one who came to see me would mistake me for a species of fossil remains, when discovered in the midst of such antediluvian surroundings; and at Mr. Spigley's first visit I was fairly on thorns. But I need have given myself no uneasiness. He *proposed* to me, to be sure, but I verily believe that he fell in love with the furniture; and had it not been for the utter impracticability of the thing, would have lavished all his endearments upon those idols of wood and satin. People talk mournfully of being married for money, and such a fate draws sympathetic tears; it is infinitely more humiliating to find oneself triumphed over by a set of tables and chairs. Well, we were married; and I left the maternal residence, and indulged my wish for modern surroundings to my heart's content. But I still entertained a grudge against these bedsteads, and tables, and chairs, and labored assiduously to procure their banishment. At length, to my great delight, my mother actually assented to my proposed plan of an auction; and every thing having been arranged, she came to stay with me while her own house was being stripped and refurnished. My mother had become almost as weary as myself of her ancient possessions; and agreed to their removal with undisguised pleasure.

"We sat chatting together in one of the front windows, when a huge conveyance stopped at the door, and a faint feeling came over me as Mr. Spigley, who had rushed up to the cart quite out of breath, removed a carefully-disposed covering from the precious contents. Was that the ghost of an old carved bedstead? the wandering spirit of a claw-footed table? or the disturbed wraith of a well known sofa? Suffice it to say that a substantial cart full of the most detestable of these unwelcome intruders walked boldly up stairs into my very apartment, as though defying me to my face. But not even was I permitted to express my indignation; that would have been some comfort; for Mr. Spigley related various hair-breadth escapes he had encountered to get these valued treasures into his own possession—all for *my* sake, for he knew how attached I must be to them, and thought that he would give me a pleasant little surprise; and called for my gratitude and admiration just as a highwayman would demand my purse."

"What did you do with the things?" inquired Mrs. Penleigh, much interested.

"I did nothing, then," was the reply, "unless it might be to follow the Susan Nipper style of making faces and calling names when nobody was by; but the next day, when Mr. Spigley's back was fairly turned, I sent for an auctioneer, and allowed him to take off the things at his own prices."

A group of lady listeners had collected around Mrs. Spigley during the progress of her stay; and some admired her spirit, while others looked fairly frightened at the idea of such determined acting on her own account. One very meek little woman went home resolved to turn over a new leaf immediately; but having commenced operations much in the same style that Bob Acres determined to fight a duel, her husband gravely assured her that she was not at all calculated for that sort of thing—it was not her forte; to which she very quietly assented.

When Mrs. Spigley arrived at her own mansion, she found her lord and master so completely wrapt up in the expected arrival of the Indian jar, of which he had become the happy possessor, that it was quite impossible to obtain a hearing upon any other subject.

"I did intend to have it placed in the library," began Mr. Spigley, rather hesitatingly, "but if you prefer it, my dear, in your dressing-room——"

"Oh, no," replied his wife, eagerly, "not at all, I can assure you—there is no room for it." She had been surveying the well-filled corners with a perplexed eye, and now felt infinitely relieved.

"Well," returned Mr. Spigley, apparently very well satisfied, "I will take it under my own eye then. Here it comes—is it not a beauty?"

Of course there was the usual crack in the side; but this, Mr. Spigley asserted, would not be discovered among the figures; and his wife soon perceived that his eyes were completely blinded to all defects. Never was there such a jar as this; and after carefully establishing it in one corner of the library, Mr. Spigley collected all the servants, as though the point to be discussed were that of life and death, and gravely repeated to each the most solemn instructions respecting the fate of the beloved jar.

Mrs. Spigley, whose risible faculties were easily excited, glanced from the demure faces around her to the wonderful jar, that stood there quite unconscious of the sensation it was creating, and could scarcely retain her amusement. With respect to Indian jars, she entertained very much the same feelings that Peter Bell experienced toward the beauties of nature:

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

Mr. Spigley had finished laying down the law; and the servants were dismissed to their several duties. He sat looking tenderly at the jar; there may, perchance, have been tears in his eyes, but to this deponent saith not.

"What do you think of doing with that new old table, and chair ditto, that came home to-day?" inquired his wife.

"Beautiful!" whispered her husband, as though he were afraid of waking it up. Just then a broad gleam of sunshine came and settled on the jar, and the figures seemed almost moving and dancing before his eyes; he gazed upon it in delight; but his wife, with her dull, worldly eyes, looked upon the crack in the side, and smiled as she left the room.

Time passed on, as the novels say, and Mrs. Spigley's mother came to make them a visit. With Mrs. Shamford Mr. Spigley always met with sympathy and consideration. The two could sit and talk of old relics and ancient valuables, unwearied, for hours together; and Mrs. Spigley generally fell asleep during these conferences, with old pitchers, dilapidated jars, and gigantic tea-pots mixed together in dreadful confusion.

It was evening; and Mrs. Shamford, with a mournful pleasure, related histories of various beloved relics that had long since passed from her possession.

"We once," said she, with a sigh, "had the most splendid old china pitcher you ever beheld. It was given to Mr. Shamford by some English merchants with whom he had had business dealings, and was really beautiful. In the middle were his initials in gilt letters; it had two handles, and was as much as three feet high."

"What became of it?" gasped Mr. Spigley.

"I used to keep cake in it very often," continued Mrs. Shamford, with an involuntary groan, and a reproachful look at her daughter, "and one day Adelaide mounted up to get at it. She had just got the pitcher in her hand when I entered the room, and——"

"What—what?" whispered her auditor.

"It fell, and was broken to pieces."

"Of course you gave her a good whipping?" inquired Mr. Spigley, in a tone that made his wife laugh.

"Patty would have been more likely to mend the pitcher," returned his mother-in-law, coolly.

"Did you ever see a real, old-fashioned silver tea-pot?" asked Mrs. Shamford.

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Spigley, a little proudly, "my mother had one."

"Well then you know the size and style of them. People were not afraid of silver then. Ours was the largest I have ever seen—it had been in the family fifty years."

"Where is that tea-pot?" almost shrieked Mr. Spigley, "I will give you five hundred dollars for it!"

"Some one else offered me the same sum," replied Mrs. Shamford, with aggravating composure, "but five thousand could not purchase it."

"What became of it?" demanded her son-in-law.

"Adelaide had it melted up into spoons."

"Mrs. Shamford," said Mr. Spigley, fairly pale with emotion, "do you wish to know my opinion of you? I think that your conduct has been perfectly inexcusable, and as for Adelaide——"

With a glance of rage too deep for utterance, Mr. Spigley strided from the room, and closed the door with a bang. His wife could not restrain her laughter; but Mrs. Shamford sat swelling with outraged dignity.

"Mother, dear," said Mrs. Spigley, "do not be offended—it is only his way; he means nothing by it."

"His way' indeed!" replied Mrs. Shamford, "it is a way that I will not put up with. 'One of his peculiarities,' I suppose you call it, since that is the term applied to all sorts of ugliness now-a-days. I expect to hear murder and house-breaking classed under the head of 'little peculiarities.' A fine time you must have of it with such a temper!"

"I do really have a nice time indeed," returned her daughter, laughing heartily, "I am almost killed with kindness. The other day I told him, partly in jest, that he had never yet presented me with a camel's hair shawl; 'upon this hint' he went out and bought me three, at nine hundred dollars a-piece—one of which is now waiting your acceptance."

Somewhat mollified by the gift, Mrs. Shamford's feelings toward her son-in-law began to soften; and in high good humor, Mr. Spigley conducted her to his library to behold the much admired jar.

Old friends often possess endearing little blemishes, by which we recognize them even through the lapse of years; sometimes it is a mole—sometimes a scar—sometimes a cast in the eye; but each and all of these before now assisted a half glimmering recollection.

Mrs. Shamford stood for a few moments, to the great delight of her son-in-law, apparently wrapt in admiration too deep for words; then she walked up to the jar, calmly turned it around, and examined it from top to bottom; finally she indulged in a somewhat malicious laugh.

"What did you give for this jar?" she asked, at length.

"Thirty-five dollars," replied her son-in-law, looking very fierce.

"I sold it to an auctioneer, among a load of other old things for fifty cents. We had it in our house for years; but every one appeared to entertain a spite against it, and the poor thing received so many wounds and bruises that it finally became disabled for service, and fell quite to pieces. A tinkering nephew of mine, who loved to exercise his talent upon everything that came in his way, splintered it together with putty and different things; and it really makes quite a respectable appearance. But as old Dr. S—always says of his patients, I should not be surprised to see it drop off at any time."

Such was Mrs. Shamford's history; and the cast of Mr. Spigley's countenance, at its conclusion, can best be expressed by the term "crest-fallen."

"But Adelaide knows nothing of this," said he, at length, "do not, I beg of you, tell her, and I will get off the old thing as soon as possible. There is an auction at Haper's to-morrow."

Mrs. Shamford promised to keep the secret; and Mr. Spigley began to find his eyes a little opened.

"I want you to go with me to an auction this morning," said Mrs. Shamford to her daughter, the next day, "so make haste and get ready."

"Why, mother," exclaimed Mrs. Spigley, in some surprise, "I thought that you disapproved of auctions. Do you really intend to bid for any thing?"

"No," was the reply, "I shall let you do that."

"Me! Why, mother, dear, you surely must be jesting! To attempt passing through these rooms now is like threading one's way through a pathless forest."

"Do as I bid you," replied her mother, sternly, "you will thank me for it yet."

Mrs. Shamford was a tall, majestic-looking woman, and her "do as I bid you" was really awful. Her daughter meekly equipped herself for walking; and the two were soon at the auction.

"Do you see that?" inquired Mrs. Shamford, as the auctioneer put up a large Indian jar, "you must bid for that."

"Why that is the very jar that Mr. Spigley brought home the other day!" exclaimed her daughter, "I suppose he became tired of it, and sent it here to be sold. I cannot bid for it, mother—he would be very angry."

"You are not to know that," returned her mother, "you can not just as he does, when he brings home things that you do not want. You may be able to cure the man if you do as I tell you."

Thus incited, Mrs. Spigley timidly bid five dollars; and the auctioneer immediately exclaimed, "five dollars only bid for this splendid jar! Why, ladies, it cost at least fifty!"

"Ten," called out Mrs. Shamford. "Remember," she whispered to her daughter, "the more you give for it the better."

"Fifteen!" screamed a little, over-dressed woman, anxious to show her good taste.

"Twenty," said Mrs. Spigley, after sundry hints from her mother.

"Twenty-five!" screamed the opposition.

"Don't let her have it, ma'am," said the auctioneer, "shall I say thirty for you? Mrs. Spigley takes it at thirty dollars."

Although rather frightened at first, now that she was fairly in for it, Mrs. Spigley determined to enjoy the joke to its full extent; and having received abundant instructions from her mother, she awaited her husband's return with a sort of mischievous satisfaction.

It was twilight when Mr. Spigley entered his own mansion; and when he opened the door, a tall object loomed up before him in the half darkness, and on attempting to brush it aside, he found that it quite resisted his endeavors.

"Oh! Mr. Spigley!" called out his wife, from the top of the stairs, "I do hope that you have not broken the jar! I thought that you would have been home earlier, and I had prepared such a pleasant little surprise for you! Have you seen it?"

"No," said he, rather angrily, "but I have felt it. What the deuce is it?"

"A superb Indian jar—a complete match for the one you bought the other day. But I only gave thirty dollars for this."

"Where did you buy it?" asked Mr. Spigley, with certain misgivings, as he pretended to examine it.

"At Haper's—is it not beautiful? There will be a pair of them now, you know."

"A pair of fools, perhaps," muttered Mr. Spigley, *sotto voce*, "but not a pair of jars."

"Shall I have this carried to the library?" continued his wife, "I noticed to-day that you had the other one removed—perhaps you were waiting to get one like it?"

"The truth is, my dear," replied her husband, rather hesitatingly, "you did not appear to admire the one I bought, and I sent it away to-day."

"What a pity!" exclaimed Mrs. Spigley, then for fear that he should suspect her of knowing, she added quickly, "but this, you see, is much handsomer."

Mr. Spigley was obliged to coincide, and look pleased, as his wife had so often done in similar circumstances; and she could not forbear smiling as she saw how ill the attempt sat upon him. His feelings toward the jar are more easily imagined than described; but his wife had evidently resolved to cherish it with reverential affection; and the same scene with the servants was repeated that had been enacted about a week before—his own feelings on this occasion being materially changed.

"What is the matter with the rolls this morning?" inquired Mr. Spigley, a few days after, "and this coffee is perfectly detestable."

"It is not very good, to be sure," replied his wife, "but Maria has left us, and the new cook does not appear to understand her business."

"*Maria left us!*" gasped Mr. Spigley, "when did she go?"

"I was obliged to discharge her," replied his wife, calmly, "she committed an offence of which I have been afraid to tell you; but, of course, you must have seen it."

Sundry damages to his personal property now flitted through Mr. Spigley's brain, like vague, mysterious shapes of horror; and he questioned his wife as to the misdemeanor, evidently dreading her answer.

"Well, then," continued Mrs. Spigley, "you must promise not to be angry, but she actually broke a small piece from the edge of that Indian jar—impelled, I suppose, by a curiosity to examine anything so beautiful."

"Is that all?" exclaimed Mr. Spigley, in a disappointed tone.

"*All!*" repeated his wife, in apparent surprise, "why, you cannot know what I am talking about! She broke the edge of that jar for which I paid thirty dollars! ('And I, thirty-five!' muttered her husband.) And would you believe it, she actually had the assurance to say that the same piece had evidently been broken out before, and stuck in with putty! Following your express commands, in case of such an offence, I dismissed her immediately; and shall treat the next culprit in precisely the same manner."

That jar had already cost Mr. Spigley sixty dollars in money, (the auctioneer allowed him five for it) and an excellent cook; he now began to hate the sight of it. He was rather afraid, though, to try an auction room again; and having given the waiter certain directions respecting its disposal, he departed to his office.

"You cannot tell what a fright I have had to-day," observed his wife, at the dinner-table, "there really seems to be a spell upon that jar of ours. ('There does, indeed!') thought Mr. Spigley.) As I was passing through the lower entry, this morning, I saw a miserable man, who comes around to buy old things, actually preparing to transport our beautiful jar to unknown regions! Of course, I soon put a stop to *that*, and expressly forbid the servants' allowing him to enter the house again. So you see that I am rather different from the Princess Badroulbondour, in the 'Arabian Nights,' who was in such a hurry to dispose of the precious lamp."

It was with difficulty that Mr. Spigley refrained from giving his wife some idea of the state of his feelings; but the jar was her purchase, and she appeared to think so much of it; then too certain twinges of conscience reminded him of his own performances. So he swallowed down his wrath as well as he could; and listened to his wife's account in silence.

The Spigleys had issued cards for one of their usual parties; which were always conducted on a scale of the greatest elegance. People always flocked to their entertainments; confident of a supper-table, and music that could not be surpassed.

"Do not be at all troubled about the table," said Mrs. Shamford, to her son-in-law, in the morning, "I have arranged all about the centre-piece—quite an idea of my own—and I can assure you that it is something altogether unique and effective."

"But I should like to see it," ventured Mr. Spigley; "what is it?"

"Now curiosity!" exclaimed his wife, "don't ever find fault with me again!"

Mr. Spigley looked rather disconcerted, and pretended to care nothing about it; though, in reality, he felt extremely curious.

The rooms were filled as usual; and as midnight approached, vague rumors were afloat respecting the supper-table. All were prepared for something extraordinary; and the opening of the doors caused a general rush to the supper-room.

Mr. Spigley felt quite as much interested as any; but at his first glance toward the table, he looked around to mark the effect. There, in the very centre, stood the detested Indian jar, surmounted by a pyramid of flowers that towered

to a height fairly approaching the ridiculous. All those cracks, and nicks, and putty windings seemed brought into full relief by the innumerable wax-lights, and he scarcely dared to raise his eyes.

"I knew you would like this," whispered his mother-in-law, in delight, "it was all my own idea."

He turned from her almost rudely, and began talking to his neighbor with much more animation than the subject seemed to require.

"They are admiring the jar," whispered Mrs. Shamford, "listen, and tell me what they say."

Mr. Spigley's agonized ear soon caught the following remarks:

"What *have* the Spigleys got there?" whispered a would-be elegante, as she drew forth her eye-glass.

"The tower of Babel, I should say," replied another, "but that, of course, is Mr. Spigley's design. He, you know, is quite frantic after *outré* antediluvianisms, and nothing short of a stuffed alligator would astonish me on this supper-table."

"That is the identical old jar that Mrs. Spigley bought the other day," observed another, "I would not have it for a gift."

"Do you know," whispered Mrs. Penleigh, confidentially, "that I do not care to go too near that gigantic jar, for fear we shall have a second edition of the Philistines? It is just ready to fall to pieces."

Every one rushed back with a shriek—there was a loud crack—another—and the jar could no longer be called one. Mr. Spigley's mortification was extreme; but his wife and mother-in-law appeared to take it very coolly. The splendid supper-table caused a universal titter; and the guests departed in the highest amusement.

"Adelaide," said Mr. Spigley, the next morning, "what do you say to having an auction here? I am rather tired of our furniture."

His wife was employed in fitting the pieces of the jar together, and after a moment's consideration, she replied,

"I consent, on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you do not bid in this jar; because I see that it can be joined together."

There are some things beyond human endurance; and Mr. Spigley, deliberately approaching the jar, dashed it to atoms.

"There!" said he, "I defy human ingenuity to mend that!"

His wife only laughed; but such a laugh. It spoke as plainly as words could.

The auction took place, and everything was sold; Mrs. Spigley taking good care that not a single staggler should be left behind; and ever since, Mr. Spigley has entertained a nervous horror of old relics, great bargains, and Indian Jars.

THE LEGEND OF GENOVEVA.

BY HELEN FAWCETT.

On the left bank of the Rhine, below Andernach, and at some short distance from the river, is the lake of Laach, celebrated as a picturesque object, and for a neighboring abbey with six towers, founded in 1093, by the Count Palatine, Henry II., who is buried within the edifice. With this locality is connected the legend of Genoveva, a princess of Brabant, who was married to the Count Palatine, Siegfried, a vassal of the old Frank Kings of Austrasia. For several years she and her husband had lived happily together, near the conflux of the Moselle and the Saar, when the invasion of France by the Moors caused Siegfried to quit his home and join in opposing the enemies of Christendom. He left his palace and his wife to the care of his particular friend, Golo of Drachenfels, who, forgetful of his duty, soon became enamored of Genoveva. For a time he was able to conceal his passion, but it was soon discovered by Countess Matilda of Strahlen, a relation of Genoveva, who dwelt in the neighborhood. Matilda had always harbored a feeling of envy against her fair kinswoman, and gladly made herself the confidant and adviser of Golo, who, urged by her counsels, at last made an open declaration of love. This outrage was received with the utmost indignation by Genoveva; and Golo, now finding his position dangerous, forged a letter, purporting to come from the major domo, Dragones, and containing an avowal of an intrigue with Genoveva. At the same time they contrived to dismiss all Genoveva's attendants, and confined her in a dungeon, that no intelligence of the truth might be conveyed to her husband.

Siegfried, who was one of the chief combatants in the great battle in which Charles Martel defeated the Moors, was severely wounded on that occasion, and being very anxious respecting the state of affairs at home, he sent his friend Carl of Rheingrafenstein to make inquiries about Genoveva, and to announce his speedy return. When Carl arrived at the castle, he found that a council, on the strength of the false accusations brought by Golo and Matilda, had already sentenced Genoveva to banishment: but so thoroughly was he convinced of her innocence, that, in accordance with an usage of early days, he declared himself her champion, and challenged Golo to mortal combat. However, he proved no match for his antagonist, and his death at the hands of Golo

rendered Genoveva's position still more hopeless. The council adhered to its first decision, and her alleged offence would have been punished with death, had not her accusers feared to awaken popular fury by a public execution. They preferred the method of private assassination; and two servants were commissioned to convey Genoveva and a child, to which she had given birth in her prison, to a dark forest, and there to murder them both. The tongues of the victims were to be brought back as a proof that the horrible deed had been performed. The ruffians undertook the office willingly enough; but when they were about to plunge a dagger into the bosom of the countess, they were so moved by her entreaties, that they spared the lives of both their intended victims, and taking them farther into the forest, so as to prevent the possibility of their return, went back to their wicked employers with two sheep's tongues, which they pretended were those of Genoveva and her child.

When Siegfried, after recovering from his wound, returned to his castle, he was so thoroughly convinced by Matilda and Golo that the decree of the council was just—especially as it had been confirmed by the issue of the combat—that he resolved to banish from his memory all thoughts of his unfaithful wife.

In the meanwhile Genoveva, after wandering some time in the forest, discovered a cavern, which served her for shelter. At the same time she was entirely without sustenance, and was contemplating a death by starvation, when, as if by a Divine mission, a white hind entered the cave, and offered its milk to the mother and child. On this and a few roots, which Genoveva afterward found, they were enabled to exist.

Siegfried, who, in spite of his resolution, could not forget Genoveva, applied himself to hunting, as a distraction from his melancholy thoughts. On one occasion, the game led him farther than usual into the depths of the forest, and he was about to return, when a white hind sprang before him. Pursuing it for a great distance, he at last wounded it with a dart, and it took refuge in a cave, which he immediately entered, and found, to his astonishment, a woman, whom, in spite of her wasted condition, he soon recognized as Genoveva. Throwing herself on her knees, she protested her innocence, and exposed the treachery of Golo and Matilda. Siegfried was

so thoroughly convinced of the truth of her words, that with joy he took her and her child into his arms. At this moment Golo, with the rest of the hunting train, entered the cavern, and so horror-stricken was the culprit at the sight of Genoveva, that, on being indignantly questioned by Siegfried, he at once avowed his guilt. Shortly afterward he expiated his offence on the scaffold; and though Matilda contrived to escape in the first instance, she fell with her horse into the Moselle while flying from her pursuers. In commemoration of her providential delivery, Genoveva built in the neighborhood of Laach a church, dedicated to the Virgin, which is still in existence, though in a ruinous condition.

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MARGARET CASWELL'S TRIALS.

BY A. L. OTIS.

A young gentleman sat in a room overlooking the college grounds at Cambridge, apparently engaged in extracting a most unusual amount of bliss from a cigar. His whole face and figure were expressive of a calm, exquisite, dreamy enjoyment. A breeze, as soft as September could make it, toyed with his hair and pressed gently against his temples, at the same time impregnating his cigar perfume with a penetrating flavor of newly-washed "country." So the wild celery permeates the canvass-back duck, and gives it its deliciousness. His law-books were lying in blissful oblivion, and no thought of their contents disturbed his mind.

But we must not ascribe this enjoyment entirely to sensual pleasure, for upon the table lies a letter from his mother, informing him that travelling having been recommended for her health, he must be her escort. Enough, surely, to give any young man pleasant dreams! But furthermore—he was requested to seek out in Andover, an aunt whom he had never seen, but who, he knew, had two pretty daughters, and obtain permission for one of them to accompany his mother. He was advised to look narrowly into the dispositions of the two girls, and if there were any choice between them to use his influence, so that the most agreeable should be decided upon as a companion for the invalid. A liberal sum of money was sent for his own use, and another in a neat package to be given to the young lady, as "fit-out" for the expedition. A sealed letter was also enclosed to his aunt.

This aunt, Mrs. Caswell, by marrying in most obstinate opposition to the wishes of her relatives, had incurred their displeasure, and been entirely neglected by some of them. Among the most unforgiving had been her own sister, the mother of Henry Gregory, the young gentleman we have described. Never since her sister's marriage had she written to her, and she had not even seen her nieces. In sickness, kinder feelings had come back, which impelled her to use some of her immense wealth, (more than sufficient for herself and her only child) in benefitting those she had so long neglected.

Henry Gregory was thinking over the difficult and dangerous duty required of him, yet he did not look upon it as difficult or dangerous. To him it appeared exciting and delightful. Only

two weeks were given him. He must return to Springfield, his home, at the end of that time.

Having made the necessary preparations, and accomplished the rapid journey to Andover, he stood before the open front door of his aunt's house, and looked down a wide sunny passage. He hesitated a moment before ringing the bell, because he felt the awkwardness of presenting himself to an aunt, who might not be inclined to forget her sister's long cherished animosity. He also felt a little anxious about the letter he was the bearer of, for knowing his mother's peculiarities, he half expected it to contain something more irritating than conciliatory. He had thought of all this before, however, and had determined by his own address and advantages, to make up for all his mother's faults, and effect a perfect reconciliation.

As he raised his hand to the bell, the parlor door opened, and two ladies came out, laughing, and so much occupied with each other, that they did not perceive him. He stepped aside, and bowed as they passed. One started and looked suddenly reserved—the other turned to him a face brightened and dimpled with smiles. Both bowed and turned down the street. "If those are my cousins," thought he, "I shall decidedly prefer the one with the dimples."

A servant came, replied that Mrs. Caswell was at home, received Mr. Gregory's card and letter, and showed him to the parlor. A very short time elapsed before his aunt appeared. She was extremely like the laughing beauty he had seen at the door, and advanced most gracefully.

"Welcome, Mr. Gregory, as the bearer of good tidings is always welcomed. You must allow me to call you my dear nephew at once, and to tell you how glad I am to find my sister's heart has at last spoken out what it has long felt, I am sure. I knew she would not remain inexorable and unreasonable. But she is as peculiar as ever, I see!"

Mr. Gregory colored, and was at a loss for a reply, but said, "he had no doubt she would understand his mother sufficiently to make due allowance for the abruptness, which continued ill-health had fostered."

"Oh, I understand her perfectly, my dear—I know just what she means when she says for instance"—she referred to the letter—"I am old

and cross, and I want somebody to wait upon me, devotedly, patiently, and humbly'—instead of demanding such servitude, she will be the most generous of friends, I remember her good heart well."

Henry had blushed and thought, "abruptness indeed!" He said aloud, "I hope most sincerely, my cousins will understand her as well as you do, and take no offence at anything that letter may contain. It must indeed be peculiar, from the extract you have read."

"I am afraid," Mrs. Caswell answered, hesitatingly, "that they do not, and will not know how to appreciate the kindness my sister means. I have not myself yet taken into consideration her proposal of having one of my daughters with her. I just ran down in my first joy to tell you, Henry, how glad I am to hear from Margaret, and to know that *now* I am at peace with all the world again. I have hardly read the letter yet—oh, here come your cousins. Margaret, Emma—come here girls." The two young ladies he had seen at the door entered.

"Margaret," said Mrs. Caswell, "this is your Cousin Henry Gregory—Emma, my dear, your cousin."

Margaret had bowed quite haughtily, but Emma advanced holding out her hand. "We have seen him before, twice," she said, "and remember well his speech last commencement. I felt quite proud of my cousin."

Gregory bowed. He was delighted with both his aunt and Emma. He hardly observed Margaret's silence and reserve, but her mother did, and said quickly, "I have a letter here, girls, from your Aunt Margaret. She is going to travel, and would like to have one of you accompany her. Of course we cannot even think about the matter till our lawgiver has decided upon it, I mean Lenox, my eldest son," she said to Gregory, "he rules paramount in this house—except when Margaret's will does not coincide with his—and that is rarely." She laughingly turned to her daughter, whose grave but beautiful face relaxed slightly.

"And now I must go to my room, and read over this dear letter," she continued, "while you amuse your cousin. Could you not take him to our pretty pond before tea, since you have your bonnets on?"

Gregory stated his pleasure at the proposition, and they left the house together.

"Mr. Gregory," Emma said, "be kind enough to explain what mother meant about the travelling; because I am all curiosity, and do not care to wait till our cautious, and not over-expeditious brother inform us."

"With much pleasure, as my mother's cause, is in this instance mine, and I do not trust to her

representation of it. She is in ill-health, and travelling has been prescribed for her. She is not satisfied with myself as companion, and she desired me to beg one of you to favor her with your society. I am sure I shall not fail to obtain her wishes if any persuasions of mine can suffice."

"Oh, it would not take much persuasion to induce me to go! I have always been so eager to travel. It has been the dream of my life, and it is exceedingly kind in your mother to invite us!"

As Gregory was about to reply, he caught a glimpse of Margaret's face, and saw upon it rather contemptuous anger.

He guessed the reason easily, and said to Emma, "my mother will be the obliged party if you consent to go. I know she will never pardon herself if she do not believe she can, in time, make you all both forgive and love her. If you refuse to meet her wishes now, she will not enjoy one day of her travels; she will reproach herself unceasingly."

Turning to Margaret, he said with cold politeness, "be so good as to understand my mother before you resent her strange whims, which are regarded by those who know her very leniently."

Margaret answered his coldness with bitterness.

"A whim indeed! which has been the drop of misery in my mother's cup of happiness for twenty years! I cannot forget it in a moment, and I cannot regard it leniently—yet—"

Gregory made no answer. He was exceedingly vexed.

"Margaret," Emma said, "let bygones be bygones, and be forgiving. You are imitating exactly what you are blaming."

"I will read Mrs. Gregory's letter; and I am willing to believe—I am anxious to forget—I certainly do not wish to cherish any prejudices."

"But do not judge my mother from her letter," Gregory said, eagerly, remembering what he had heard of it. "I must tell you that mother says the very bluntest and hardest things she can, so as to touch and surprise the more by her goodness, it seems to me. Do not judge her by that letter, I assure you she wishes to know you, and to love you—and yet probably her own words will deprive her of that happiness!"

"Oh, I begin quite to comprehend her character," Emma said, "she is ill too, and it must have fatigued her to write so long a letter. We shall not mind anything she may say that is—not exactly—that is—blunt—you know."

"Yes, she is ill, and her disease is the most difficult one to bear—nervous debility. Perhaps on that account you may not enjoy yourself so much in travelling. It is painful to be with one who is suffering. But I hope that will not keep

you at home, for we can snatch many moments of exquisite pleasure from the magnificent scenery, or have some most delightful amusement laughing at fellow travellers."

He spoke almost exclusively to Emma, and she replied,

"Certainly, to be sure we could, and I do not doubt that we could do much to make the journey more comfortable to aunt. We could talk to her, you know, when she feels dull; we could read to her when we are detained by storms at hotels, or we could sit up at night to keep her company when she is sleepless."

"I have no doubt you would render her travels doubly beneficial by your presence; I am sure you would make them a thousand times pleasanter to me."

"Oh, it would be the most delightful thing in the world to go, and I like to wait upon the sick. I once sat up all night with a sick lady. I had an easy-chair, a new novel, hot coffee and rolls—in short, everything to make me comfortable; and it is so pleasant to be thanked—but how lovely the pond looks—and there is a lily within reach of your cane, Mr. Gregory."

The lily was captured after much laughing, and some peril of a ducking. Margaret seemed somewhat less grave; Emma was in high spirits; Gregory filled with the utmost admiration for her and contentment with himself, therefore they had a very pleasant walk home. Nothing more was said of travelling that evening. Henry was introduced to his other cousins, Lenox and Frederic, who both received him somewhat distantly, the latter indeed, haughtily. But he had the happy art of imperturbability, and seemed to see nothing of it.

His aunt had been the impulsive, joyous creature which he now saw Emma, and she had not grown more reserved with age. There was a perfect openness in all she said and did, that passed simplicity even. The next morning she said at the breakfast table, where they were all assembled except the eldest son,

"Well, my dear girls, Lenox thinks you had better not go with your aunt; he don't think either of you could satisfy her. In short, he thinks from her letter——" She hesitated.

"Do let me see the letter," Henry cried, "it needs explanation I have no doubt—perhaps I can in some degree make you see my real mother through it."

"Oh, I understand Margaret perfectly, my dear—but Lenox—well, take the letter, and if you can say anything to make Lenox understand it, pray do—that is, if either of you would like to go," she said, looking from one to the other of her daughters.

Emma said at once, that it would give her

much pleasure. Margaret would think about it when she had read the letter.

"I should advise you to accept your aunt's offer," said Mrs. Caswell. "I want her to love my daughters. I want her to know you, and I think it will be a great advantage to you to travel. Besides my dear sister is sick, and I should feel easier to have you with her, since I cannot go to her myself. The only question is, which shall go."

"You forget, mother," Margaret said, "that Lenox thinks we had both better stay at home." She glanced at Gregory who was reading the letter, his face alternately coloring with shame, or sinking with dismay. His mother the obliged one indeed! No one could have imagined it for one instant after having read her mode of invitation. "She had persuaded herself to take one of her nieces with her, feeling what an advantage it would be to either of them, but she must explicitly state upon what terms." She required a nurse, in short, and one who must bear with her whims, but she promised in return a competency for life to the one who pleased her, and faithfully served her. These things made no impression upon Mrs. Caswell that was not effaced by the sweet words of affection and reconciliation which followed them. But as Henry read, he felt that Lenox might well object to either of his sisters accepting an offer which was almost insulting. When he looked up, which he did reluctantly and in confusion, he saw only his aunt and Emma. Margaret and Frederic had left the table. They were in Lenox's study, and he silently followed Emma who went to join them. He merely said what he had said before, that his mother had certainly written rudely, but that they would find her really kind. He then left them to talk the matter over.

Emma was the first to speak, after Lenox had read the letter aloud to them. She declared that nothing on earth would ever tempt her to be voluntarily in her aunt's presence for a single hour; she said she should die of fright, and neither enjoy herself nor be useful. So that, for her part, she would give the matter no further consideration, but try to forget the letter and love her aunt, since her mother wished them to do so.

Frederic declared that if either of his sisters should accept an invitation which was thrown at them in that contemptuous, condescending, insulting manner, he would never speak to her again. Lenox hemmed, and all eyes were upon him.

"Go," he said, in his stentorian voice, which both in volume and weight seemed disproportioned to him, "go, giddy pates. We have all we want from you. Your opinions shall have

their due weight. Leave Margaret and myself to settle the question."

They willingly obeyed, and Lenox began to speak of reasons for refusing the offer, but Margaret said she had thought all night about it, and that she should go with her aunt. "You will undoubtedly have much to endure," Lenox said. "Even her petted son thought it necessary to warn Emma of his mother's temper."

"Yes, but I shall go fortified. I know what to expect. The only thing which will indeed be a trial is the thought, that perhaps she will consider me as accepting a favor from her contemptuous hand. She seems to think she does us a great charity, and I can't endure—oh, yes, I will endure, for perhaps she will enable mother to give up harassing cares, and the dreadful fear of future poverty, which seems to weigh upon her sensitive mind. Perhaps I shall be the means of preventing Fred's entering college as a servitor, which is so humbling to his pride. And then poor Emma need not go as governess, for which she is so unfitted by her easy, careless temper, and——" She hesitated.

"Say at once that you also hope to aid me in finishing my law studies. But I am sure we shall not one of us consent to have you sacrifice yourself for us."

"I shall sacrifice nothing but my pride, and I could endure much for the sake of travelling. It will be to my own advantage also."

"Well, Margaret, say nothing definite about the matter yet. We may have at least to-day to deliberate." After an involuntary glance of affection and respect he turned to his books, and Margaret left him, but returned to say, "I have decided, Lenox, and shall inform Henry Gregory of my determination."

He smiled as he answered, "you always decide so promptly, and persist so firmly. You are a woman after all, Margaret, and instinct guides you, not reason."

"Say conscience guides me, Lenox, this time at least."

She shut the door and went to her mother.

In the meanwhile Emma had donned a sun-bonnet and gardening apron. Armed with pruning scissors, she was walking in the garden, snipping off all the defects in her rose-bushes. Henry passed the gate, but returned and entered. She saw him coming, and her rosy young face was covered with smiles. Henry thought he had never seen such a beautiful, graceful embodiment of the spirit of joy and good-nature.

"My tea-roses cannot hold up their weight of perfume," she said. "Just pass that one carelessly—you need not approach it—and you will perceive how powerful it is."

"Yes, but I cannot pass it. I am drawn

irresistibly to it, and must hold 'up its head till I have had a stronger taste of its sweetness."

"Oh, you will soon get tired of it if you do so. See, you are willing to leave it already. If you had only stood where I told you, you could have enjoyed it a long time."

"Only your greater attraction could have drawn me from the rose. Had you remained where you were I should also."

Emma smiled, and shook her head. Henry continued, "I am so intensely interested in the final result of your consultation in the study, that I hope you will not keep me in suspense a moment after the matter is decided."

"Lenox will let you know when he has made up his mind. But why you should be so intensely interested, I do not perceive." She blushed coquettishly.

"It could not certainly be a matter of indifference to me, since having the pleasure of your society is the subject of it."

"I do not think they will decide to let me go, because I feel myself entirely unfit for such an office, however much I might like to travel; and they all quite agree with me."

"Oh, do not say so. It will do mother good only to look at you."

"Well, well, I have nothing to say about it," she answered, and in order to turn the conversation, gave him some flowers to take to the summer-house for her. She followed with a glass case, and Henry watched her with pleasure, as she gracefully arranged them. Margaret came in a few minutes afterward, and said, stiffly,

"Mr. Gregory, I accept your mother's offer, and will be ready to accompany you whenever you may wish to go."

Henry bowed, and said he was happy they had concluded to do himself and his mother this kindness, but Margaret saw a very evident disappointment in his countenance, as he turned unconsciously from her to look eagerly at Emma. Her cheek flushed when he said, wilfully mistaking her words as a mere declaration that one of them would except, "ah, well, it only remains then to decide which of you will consent to give us your much desired company. Shall I leave you to discuss that point alone?"

"I have no time at present," Margaret said, and hastily left the arbor.

"My sister meant that Lenox had decided—that she should go," Emma said, hesitatingly.

"Ah! Are you sure that was so? Have you nothing to say about it?" Lenox was approaching. "Say you wish to go," he whispered, blushing violently.

Emma smiled in twenty dimples, but said nothing. She had not the least idea of doing as he asked. The letter had very much alarmed

her timid nature. Lenox said, apparently carelessly, that Margaret had consented to travel with Mrs. Gregory, and Henry felt that it was of no use to say more, or to hope for the society of the cousin he infinitely preferred. He felt very much vexed. Leaving the arbor, he took from his trunk the present which his mother had sent to her future companion, and went with it to the parlor. Margaret was alone. He did not make any pretence of pleasure, but said shortly, "that his mother had requested him to give that package to her who was so kind as to accede to her wishes." He stood a moment while Margaret hastily opened the morocco case, and saw within a beautiful watch surrounded by gold pieces. The color rushed to her face, and she looked in amazement to Henry. He said very coldly,

"You have a slight proof that mother does not mean *all* she says in that letter."

Mrs. Caswell entered, and Margaret put the watch in her hands without saying a word. Henry left the room, being impatient to rejoin Emma. When they were alone, Mrs. Caswell said hesitatingly to her daughter,

"Yes, that is just like my sister. She always was irritable and exacting, but generous. She has a very impulsive disposition, one moment quite fascinating, and again almost terrible. I hope you will be able to get along comfortably with her, dear. You must have patience."

"What I never had in my life!" Margaret answered, despairingly. "But it is quite time I had learned it. Perhaps this opportunity has been sent to me expressly to cultivate what I am so deficient in."

Two weeks flew quickly. Henry was every day more charmed by the mirthful, graceful Emma, and though his respect for her sister was leading him to like her better than he had at first, he could not conceal his disappointment that Emma was not to be his travelling companion. All those little necessary attentions it would be a delight to bestow upon her, must be wasted upon her sister!

On the evening before their departure, he sat in the moonlighted arbor with Emma, a declaration of love rising every moment to his lips. But with great tact she averted the threatened confession, and many a time afterward he thanked her mentally for thus kindly preventing such impetuous folly. It was acting out the moral of the garden science. She had the tact to feel that he would have tired of her as soon as he did of her roses overladen with sweetness.

Mrs. Gregory received her son with the fondest affection, and when he presented his cousin, she turned scrutinizingly toward her. Margaret was quite pale, and her natural reserve seemed like haughtiness. Mrs. Gregory was evidently not

prepossessed. She kissed her coldly, and rang the bell for a servant to conduct her to her room, saying she could rest herself until dinner time. Margaret was thankful to be alone. She saw that her trial was to be even greater than she had supposed, for irritability was so plainly written in her aunt's face, and her words had been so coldly condescending, that she lost her reliance in the better nature she had expected. Each day only confirmed her fears. She was called upon unmercifully. She was supposed to have no right to a moment of her own, and with all her conscientious endeavors to do her duty, she failed to please. She was intensely miserable, but this was not sufficient to make her give up her self-sacrificing determination.

She found some pleasure when they set out on their travels. There was then something to occupy her mind. One of the brightest anticipations of her life had been to see the Hudson, and her eyes sparkled with unusual excitement as she stepped on the magnificent boat at Albany. Henry remarked this, and was disposed to enjoy her pleasure as they sat together on deck, and now sped past the increasing beauty of the shores. But this was not of long duration, for Margaret was requested to accompany the invalid to her state-room and read to her, while she rested in her berth. Bitter disappointment, actual tears were in Margaret's eyes as she gave a lingering look around her, and then followed Mrs. Gregory to her state-room. Henry observed it, and thought his mother unreasonable. He saw the depth of Margaret's disappointment, and it was one he could sympathize with. He wished her also to stay on his own account, that he might point out to her the celebrated places they passed, might see her enjoy the beauty of the scenery, and admire his favorite spots. He was sure from her first flush of pleasure that she would not listen to him indifferently. After some time he went to his mother's room, and begged her to spare Margaret until they had passed the Highlands, which they were just approaching. She consented peevishly. Margaret joyfully, thankfully took her cousin's arm, and they stood upon the upper deck in the free, fresh breeze in delight; Henry talking rapidly, full of excitement, while Margaret listened with interest, and looked with keen pleasure at the beautiful shores. She had never so exquisitely enjoyed a moment's freedom, and when she felt she must return, she said so with a reluctant sigh, adding a few words of earnest thanks, which convinced Henry that he had given great pleasure. He was pleased with himself and with her, and he followed her to his mother's room, unwilling to enjoy what she must be debarred from.

After leaving New York, they travelled by

land through Pennsylvania's beautiful mountain scenery, and then took their way still to the South. At a small country town in Virginia Mrs. Gregory was taken suddenly ill. And now commenced Margaret's severest trial. Her aunt was perfectly unmerciful. She exacted the most incessant assiduity, the most unsleeping care. Unreasonable and capricious, Margaret's most unwearying efforts could not satisfy her.

Oh, how different are sick-rooms! yet all teach important, valuable lessons. In some, from the invalid's touching example, may be learned the calm comfort of resignation, the consolation of religion, and the "beauty of holiness." And by witnessing these the soul is unconsciously purified, made better without effort, washed gently, yet searchingly of its earthliness. In other cases the lessons are harder, and perhaps more beneficial for that very reason. Patience must stretch every nerve to support the weight of unreasonable demands, and ungrateful dissatisfaction which is thrown upon it. Love must grow bountiful to be able to meet the demands incessantly made of it. Religion must become a fervent reality to supply the consolation so much wanted by the sufferer, and which nothing else can give. To the invalid also his illness may be a blessing. God never places us in a position from which, if we are willing, we may not draw the highest good.

But Mrs. Gregory made no attempt either to benefit herself by self-restraint and cheerful resignation, nor to bless others by her beautiful example. Margaret's trials were those which most sternly exercised her spirit, and she endeavored to meet them with resolution. Henry pitied her most sincerely, and would willingly have taken upon himself part of her duties, but Mrs. Gregory would not allow it. She could not bear to see her darling boy wearing himself out for her. Neither would she allow the only servants the place afforded—blacks—to approach her.

Henry saw Margaret standing one cold evening by the window, apparently looking at the gorgeous sunset. He had just come in from a brisk walk, and was in high spirits. Standing by her side, he related with much animation his day's adventures with a party of old Virginians, and throwing himself into an easy-chair, declared "that if his mother were only better, he should be almost wild with the delight of freedom from all book-study, and with the keen relish he felt in the knowledge of real life." He paid small regard to Margaret's short answers. He was not looking for sympathy, but only expending a little of his own exuberant joy. She suddenly threw up the window and leaned out in the cold air. He looked at her surprised, and saw that she was fainting. Starting up he seated her in the chair, and she recovered almost immediately.

"I am ashamed of myself," she said, struggling with rising tears.

"Why, Margaret, you are really ill. You have been over-exerting yourself. Mother is too exacting. She is unreasonable."

He spoke vehemently. Margaret did not answer, and he continued, "I will put a stop to it. You shall not be so oppressed."

"No," she said, earnestly, "you must not interfere at all. What I have undertaken I will perform. I knew what to expect after the first day, and nothing is required of me that I do not consider it my duty to do—that I should not do if it were not required."

"But, Margaret, you cannot stand this. Your health will give way, and that shall not be! It is a shame to see how you are worn out."

The sympathy in his voice was more than she could bear; but after a minute or two of violent weeping, she said, with effort, "I have no business to give way."

"But you cannot help it, Margaret—you are ill."

"It seems impertinent to be ill now. Your mother is worse to-night, Henry."

He grew paler, and said, "very much worse? Was that what affected you so?"

"No—oh, no. She is only not so comfortable, and she needs me particularly. I am afraid I shall not be well enough to sit up with her to-night."

"Indeed you should go directly to bed at any rate. You have had no undisturbed rest now for a week. I will sit up with mother—and, Margaret, as her son, I can never be grateful enough to you."

She rose hastily and said she should retire. Henry went to his mother's room, and experienced that night a little of Margaret's trial. Yet how mollified! The demands upon him were made in the fondest tone—everything he did gave pleasure, and an affectionate effort was made to spare him any needless exertion.

The next morning Margaret appeared quite refreshed, and she received with a blush of pleasure Henry's kind inquiries, and the assurance of Mrs. Gregory that she had been missed. Her task that day was lighter, for Henry had spoken to his mother about her, and had excited a little remorse in her heart. When night came, Margaret again took her place at Mrs. Gregory's bedside, and Henry retired; but the next night he insisted upon sitting up again. Mrs. Gregory remonstrated, and said Margaret could sleep beside her, and need not lose much rest. Henry knew too well his mother's wakefulness and incessant calls for assistance. Seeing Mrs. Gregory's desire that she should remain, Margaret refused positively to go to bed. Henry was

obstinate, and establishing himself in a comfortable rocking-chair, he announced his intention of remaining to watch Margaret, and learn a nurse's duties that his mother might be induced to tolerate him every other night.

He saw poor Margaret required every few moments to give his mother a piece of ice or medicine, or to read in order to calm her mind, or to comb her hair, to soothe her nerves. No effort was made to spare her trouble—no thanks were whispered affectionately to make her forget it—and no complaining, irritating words were suppressed. The long night was one hard trial of patience and gentleness. Margaret became a saint in Henry's eyes. He regarded her with wondering pity and admiration. He often offered his assistance, but this only excited his mother so much, and made her so angry at Margaret, that he desisted. Leaning back in his chair, he thought over with interest all that the poets have said of woman's devotion in time of sickness. Men have never refused nobly to recognize, and gratefully to acknowledge their obligations to women in the dark hours of bodily affliction. They have repaid by their gratitude all that woman has done for them at those times. Therefore Henry was able to recall many appropriate lines. It was well that Margaret was beautiful, or she might not have borne comparison with these poet creations. There is something infinitely more touching in the reality, however, than in the most brilliant painting, and as Henry recalled verse after verse, each seemed to fail in expressing all he could think and feel. Seeing Margaret remain standing, passing her soft fingers down the parted hair on his mother's forehead after the latter had fallen asleep, he rose and softly laid his hand upon her arm, pointing to his chair. She shook her head, but he persisted, and as a compromise she sat upon a foot-stool and leaned her head against the bed. Sleep came almost instantly to her overtaken eyes, and Henry really enjoyed seeing her take this rest. Yet it was of short duration. An impatient, sudden turn made her start to her feet and resume her soothing motion. In a few moments Henry again wished her to take the easy-chair, and when she refused silently, he placed another near her with an entreating look. She smiled and accepted it, since she could still continue to smooth the care-worn brow.

Henry was now quite satisfied, and it was not many moments before he was sound asleep. When he awoke the morning star shone with startling beauty, and the thin moon looked pale beside it. The edge of the rich purple darkness which surrounded it was just brightening into orange. Henry sat silently enjoying the seldom seen beauty, and did not think of Margaret till

the orange had become golden, and the sun was about to rise. His heart lost all its contentment as he saw her sitting in exactly the same posture, her eyes closed, but her hand still busy. He had a vague remembrance of his mother's being awake many times through the night, of hearing her scold, and of having a kind of night-mare impossibility of waking to defend Margaret. She looked now most touchingly beautiful,

"Her lot is on you to be found untired,
Watching the stars out by the bed of pain."

he thought, and then fell into a reverie imagining what woman's lot is. The result was, that rising in the throat, that filling of the eyes, and that oppression at the heart which is pity deeply felt. It was impotent pity for a fate that seemed to him unendurable. Had he told Margaret his feelings, she could easily have comforted him, because she could have assured him that woman's trials bring their own reward, and that what seems insupportable to one nature is scarcely felt by another. The mated eagle pines and dies in a cage; while a dove find in it a home, and coos all day in contented love. There is a satisfaction in helping, which is woman's recompense, and which God seems kindly to grant to her especially, that self-devotion may not go unrewarded when it is lavished on the forgetful or ungrateful.

Mrs. Gregory awoke as the first sunbeam entered, and she said to Margaret, "go, child, and sleep now. You need not come back till nine o'clock. Place my Bible and prayer book where I can reach them."

Margaret did as she was told, and left the room. Henry followed her. He took her hand in the darkened passage, and pressed it to his lips. "You are a ministering angel," he said, with a feeling which made the old words seem quite new. She was too weary to speak. He saw how tired she was, and said she must not rise at nine, that she must sleep all day. He still held her hand.

"Let me go," she said, in a low, trembling voice. He saw that she was again almost too weak to control the emotion which he ascribed to misery, but which was caused by happiness at his sympathizing tone, and the kind care he felt for her. She had not learned to do, without affection. Her heart never before lonely yearned for its accustomed atmosphere of love.

She was with Mrs. Gregory at nine, though the short sleep she had had only made her feel her weakness. Henry was in the room when she entered. Mrs. Gregory received her with perfect indifference, and when Margaret mistook some of her hastily, almost incoherently uttered

directions, she spoke with an irritation only too habitual.

Margaret's cheek flushed, and an angry self-defence was ready to utter itself, but she controlled it. Henry, however, was not so forbearing. He said sharply, "I wish, mother, you would remember that Margaret has been up all night, and has been most devotedly unwearying in her kindness to you."

"My son," said his mother, who was easily excited to anger, "I have made a bargain with Margaret. She is to bear my whims, and to consult my feelings explicitly. In return I give her what will make her comfortable for life, and enable her to support her mother. We understand each other. I see she is determined to do her duty, to perform her part of the bargain. I am satisfied with her, and shall perform mine. There is no love lost between us!"

Henry's face expressed the greatest indignation.

"It is not a fair bargain," he said. "Margaret gives you what no money can pay for—and dear mother," he added, more gently, as he saw Margaret much affected by his words, "I think if you would let her she would love you."

"Let her! Everybody knows that I welcome affection, and can return it. But Margaret never did love me, and never will. She is perfectly cold-hearted. She does nothing from affection—only from duty."

Margaret was about to leave the room without any attempt at self-justification, but Henry caught her hand and detained her.

"Do you love my mother, or do you not?" he asked.

"I do not," she said, firmly, while Henry looked astonishment itself.

"I told you so," said his mother, drily. Turning to Margaret, she asked, "and the reason I gave for what Henry calls your devotion was the true one?"

"Certainly."

"You do not feel even gratitude to me? Pure, dry duty actuates you?"

"For none but the very greatest considerations would I consent to bear with you as I do—and, therefore, I think I am under no obligations to you."

"You do not hold yourself cheap then," Mrs. Gregory said, with a mixture of irritation and satisfaction.

Margaret replied sincerely—"I am glad I have had an opportunity of letting you thoroughly understand me."

"This was necessary to complete the bargain," Mrs. Gregory said, smiling. "Now there can be no mistake about it. I like open dealing. Come here and sign our compact with a kiss, child."

Henry was amused. He thought wisely of woman, and half admired, half pitied her. He imagined two men concluding a bargain with a kiss, and he laughed aloud as he said, "I thought your compact would make you enemies, and behold it has produced the first token of affection between you."

"I like honesty and courage," said his mother, bluntly.

Margaret, with her lightened heart, could admire the sensible mind which was better pleased with the truth than with flattery.

When she had left the room, Henry asked with some anxiety what his mother really felt toward Margaret after her open avowal. She replied,

"I really feel the highest respect, my son, and I hope when you begin to look out for a wife, you will have the sense to find principle such as Margaret's the greatest attraction to you. Make it the one thing indispensable, and never let mere sweetness of temper captivate you."

Henry thought of Emma and blushed. He also thought that if his mother were in Margaret's place, and could draw a comparison between herself and his aunt, she would not consider sweetness of temper a trifle.

"If Margaret had only felt any affection for me her task would have been endurable," continued Mrs. Gregory, thoughtfully, "but how the child could be so attentive to me, and so considerate toward me when every harsh word must have rankled in her heart unsoothed, unexcused by love, I cannot imagine!"

Henry thought he should vastly prefer devotion prompted by love, to this dry, unpersonal obedience to duty, but he was well inclined to acquiesce in Mrs. Gregory's favorable estimate of his cousin, and he felt singular satisfaction in her allusion to his future wife.

Some weeks passed. Mrs. Gregory was still too ill to travel, and Margaret continued to be her overtasked nurse. Yet her days were much brighter, for her aunt treated her at times with a rough, unwilling kind of respect and affection, which was delightful from its singularity.

The mother and son were sitting together one morning, when the mild air permitted them to have the window open. Margaret, just returning from a walk, passed the window, and held up some alder tassels which had made an early debut. Her walk had given a buoyant impulse to her spirits. When she entered the room she approached quickly, and laying the blossoms in her aunt's lap, bent as if to kiss her, but instantly drew back confused. Mrs. Gregory seemed displeased, and Margaret quite sorry for being guilty of such an unintentional piece of presumption. Henry's cheek had flushed at Margaret's movement, but he now laughed.

"No, no," he said, "none of that. It is not in the agreement. Pray don't give mother more than she bargained for, Margaret. She respects a close business man, or woman either. If you have any love to throw away, don't waste it on mother."

"Pshaw, Henry, I care for affection as much as you do," Mrs. Gregory said, replying to the inference.

"Do you care for mine, aunt?" Margaret asked, timidly.

"Certainly, my child. Do you love me now?"

"Yes, dearly."

"Bless you, child."

"There," Henry cried, "the second bargain is made. Well, Margaret, are you happy or unhappy?"

"Very happy since I have some one to love."

That evening Margaret, with a light and comforted heart, sat looking out upon the setting sun, and was thinking what a blessed change the conversation of the morning might effect in her daily life, when Henry entered. He colored when he saw her alone, and approached hesitatingly. He leaned over her chair and said, laughingly, "so you were unhappy because you had no one to love! Couldn't you have loved me?"

Margaret looked up to give a merry answer, but when their eyes met they suddenly found they were both in earnest. A blush and a declaration were the immediate results, and when they compared notes, it was found that Henry loved Margaret because he had seen how devoted she could be, because he felt that her love would be an inestimable treasure to him, comforting him through a life of trial—and she loved him because he had been kind to her, and because she liked to love him!

I hope no lady reader will blush indignantly, as she so often has cause to in stories of this kind—at the supposition that a husband is granted to the heroine as a recompense for her goodness. Nothing is farther from my intention. Any one who could desire to have Margaret rewarded for having acted conscientiously, could never do as she did, nor understand her feelings in so doing. Notwithstanding the inference, I must close my story at this point, for I consider Margaret's example good for nothing after she was actuated by love and not by duty. It is the easiest, the most gratifying thing in the world to serve those we love, and lessons to that effect are entirely superfluous.

HARRIET WALLACE.

BY ANNE KINGLEY.

HARRIET WALLACE was my chosen friend and companion, and surely she was sufficient to satisfy the most fastidious, if ought on earth could satisfy; for rare beauty was hers, with a heart as warm as sunshine, and kindly feelings toward all her fellow creatures. Who, who could help loving the lovely Harriet?

Our acquaintance commenced at the school of Mrs. Woodman, the best and kindest of teachers. Like Harriet, I was an only child, and this circumstance seemed to cement the closer the chain that bound us together; for alike away from our beloved parents, it was natural we should cling together, though our natures were so widely different; for I was too impetuous, whilst all Harriet did was marked by cool deliberation and thought. She was two years my senior, and the most perfect personification of beauty I ever beheld. We were almost constantly together, and truly I possessed a second mother in my friend, for it was she who sat by me day after day, endeavoring to make plain the hated arithmetic;—and my French translation too, how often has my dear friend by a few minutes of patient explanation, obviated the difficulties of previous hours. We had remained at the school of Mrs. Woodman for the space of two years, and the time had now arrived when we must separate, perhaps forever; Harriet to return to her home in North Carolina, I to leave for another establishment in the State of New York, for the purpose of completing my education. It was the night before my friend's departure—we had retired early to our rooms, by the request of our dear teacher, but not to sleep; for our hearts were too full to allow such repose. When I reflected upon the happy years we had spent together, and how quickly they had flown, I could not restrain myself, and my overcharged feelings gave vent in tears. Harriet, ever alive to the distress of another, came up and plead with me not to weep; "for," said she, "I feel unhappy enough already, and when I see you weep, it only increases my distress; and besides, my dearest girl, you know that Mrs. Woodman would feel sad to see you so, and you would not wish that; so dry up your tears, get into bed and try to sleep." I complied with her request of retiring, not, however, before I had received her promise that she would soon follow. Determined

not to close my eyes, I lay for a long time reflecting on the changes of life, and how useless it was to toil for happiness here below. By the light of the lamp I observed Harriet engaged in prayer, and surely a lovelier sight I never beheld. There she knelt, her dark eyes suffused with tears, and her bosom heaving with emotion; but when she arose from her knees, the cloud had passed from her brow, and her beautiful face had again become calm. Oh, thought I, religion's ways "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." But I had at last to break through my resolution of not closing my eyes, for I could resist no longer.

Early in the morning, I was awakened by a knock at my door, and a loud voice inquiring if the trunks of Miss Wallace were prepared. I awoke, but with such a sense of sorrow that I would have given worlds, were they mine to give, could I but have slept on.

After performing our regular duties of reading and praying together, we descended to the parlor, where Mr. Wallace was sitting ready to convey his darling child to her happy home. Never before had I felt so solemn as the last kiss was given, and Harriet took her seat in the stage; for the thought, perhaps we may never meet again, would intrude itself, hard as I strove to overcome it. As I also was to leave the next day, I was not required to participate again in the duties of the school, and dear Mrs. Woodman seeing how depressed I was, endeavored in every way to amuse me.

The next day I left also, and after remaining at home for a few weeks, I took up my abode for the time at the large school of Mrs. P——, but there was no Harriet there, and my time passed very slowly. My friend and myself had regularly corresponded since our separation, and this was my chief pleasure till I left school also. Harriet had written to me numerous pressing invitations to pay her a visit, as she had something very important to communicate to me, which could only be done by seeing me.

I complied with her request, as my parents were also gone on a tour of some months, and they were to stop for me, on their return. It was a lovely evening in the month of July, and after an absence of four years, that I found myself approaching the grounds of Major Wallace.

His residence was the most beautiful of the kind I had ever beheld, and the flowers that adorned the walks showed that my Harriet's fostering care was there. She was standing at the door, and upon seeing me, she ran with the step of a fawn to meet me; in a minute I was in her arms. When she left school she was just sweet sixteen, and lovely as she was then, her beauty had now increased to almost ethereal loveliness. Her parents were like their daughter, good kind and intelligent. The Major was a most delightful companion; he had travelled much, and possessed good natural talents. Mrs. Wallace, too, was remarkably intelligent. Both well deserved so great a prize, and their daughter was their only earthly idol.

"Well, Harriet," said I, after we had retired for the night, "what is that important secret, which can only be communicated personally? I am all impatience to hear." After numerous blushes, she informed me of the important fact.

"You know, my dear friend," said she, "that before I went away from school, papa told me that there was a young gentleman, a great friend of his, whom he expected to return with him; and he hoped I would endeavor to make myself agreeable to him, as he was under great obligations to the gentleman's father. We had not proceeded far on our journey, ere this friend joined us. I found him highly intellectual, and exceedingly handsome. He returned home with us, and has since been a constant visitor at our house. His name is Henry Stanley. In one week I am to be his bride; and I claim you as my first, bridesmaid. You won't refuse, my friend, I know you will not."

I of course consented, and on the next day was introduced to the groom, a most perfect specimen of manly beauty. Truly, thought I, Harriet has made a good choice. The important day at last arrived. I arranged the bride's dark hair in natural ringlets over her swan-like neck; a wreath of bridal flowers twined gracefully among them; a satin dress fitted closely to her tiny form, with no other ornament than her wedding ring, and "a meek and quiet spirit," which, in the sight of God, is above all price.

I went upon a tour with the gay bridal party; Harriet herself, the gayest and the liveliest of all, and then returned to my home more enraptured than ever with my dear friend.

Eight years had passed since I had seen Harriet Stanley, and, strange to say, even heard from her. I had written often to her, yet my letters had never been answered. As I had occasion to travel south, and determined to endeavor to see my friend. But oh, how changed was everything around the once magnificent mansion of Major Wallace. I saw at a glance that the ruling spirit

of that once happy home was no longer there, and sad and bitter forebodings took possession of me. I ordered the coachman to stop at the door, which was opened by a man whom I recognized as the former waiter at the house of the Major, and hope once more filled my well nigh bursting heart. But this was soon mercilessly dashed to the ground; for on inquiry if the family still resided there, I was answered that they had long since removed, but to what place no one could inform me.

Nothing now remained but to bear up under this disappointment as I best might; for all prospect of ever again meeting my beloved friend seemed at an end, when one evening we passed through a lonely road beside which stood a small, rude house, but so clean, nice and tempting, that to us it was like an oasis in the desert. The coachman knocked, and a most beautiful little girl of some six years old presented herself at the door, at the same time politely requesting us to enter. Her features strongly reminded me of my long lost, still much loved Harriet. "Do you live here alone?" said I, for I saw or heard no human being save my sweet little guide.

"No, madam," she replied, while the same pensive shade passed over her features that I had often observed in my friend; "mamma lives here, too, I will call her, if you please."

Just then a woman silently entered, and in another moment Harriet was in my arms. It was indeed her, but alas! how sadly changed. Not that her beauty had in any way diminished, for she seemed too pure almost for earth, but her countenance wore a settled shade of sadness that showed the gloom of the heart within. I inquired after her husband.

"My husband," said she, as though but half conscious of what she either said or did; then lifting up the curtains of a bed which I had not before observed, "there they lay, my husband and my boy."

I uttered a scream, for there they lay in sleep upon a bed, but 'twas the sleep of death within their coffins. A malignant fever had carried them off in one day; and there the wife and mother sat without the means of procuring for them decent burial. Alas! what a sad, sad change for her, the once admired and courted woman. Unbounded wealth had been hers; once she need but make a request and it was gratified, but what a change.

I soon learned the sad story. Mr. and Mrs. Wallace had long since mingled with their kindred dust, and were mercifully spared seeing their darling daughter's misery. Speculation had ruined her husband and nearly broke his heart. She had often written, but the letters had all miscarried.

After the burial of my poor Harriet's hopes within the cold, cold tomb, my lovely little namesake, in whom I had become so interested, sickened with the same fever that laid her father's and her brother's head low; and soon she too was no more. My friend uttered not a word of complaint; not even a sigh escaped her lips; but her cheek became whiter, every day her step became less firm, and I saw but too plainly that consumption had marked her for its victim. I returned with her to my home, in hopes that change of air and scene might avert, for a time, the impending stroke. But it was all in vain. She withered slowly yet surely, still she never murmured. One night as I was preparing for bed, I heard her gentle voice calling me to her side. . I went, when she thus spoke—

"I have for a long time felt my last hour was near, yet before I go let me entreat you, my dear friend, to love the Lord your God, through whose grace alone I have been upheld in the sore trials through which I have passed. Oh, do, dear Anne, meet me in heaven! I come, Henry, Julia, mother, father, I come, I come."

I looked, and the lovely Harriet Stanley was no more. Hard as the task was, I closed those eyes now sealed in death; I gazed upon her in her coffin; I imprinted a kiss upon her snowy forehead, and then I let her go; yet only for a little season. Soon I trust we shall meet again.

THE MARINER'S BRIDE.

BY JAMES H. DANA.

It was a night of tempest. The wind roared, the rain dashed, and the neighboring surf thundered on the iron bound coast, till the frail cottage seemed to rock in the strife of the elements.

The young bride stood by the window, pressing her face against the pane, and vainly endeavoring to pierce the darkness with her dim eyes, from which the tears fell hot and fast.

She had been married but a fortnight, and this was the first absence of her husband. The belle of an inland town, she had refused every admirer, till the frank manners and handsome person of a young fisherman, who had already won a reputation in his pursuit, accomplished the conquest of her heart.

But of the perils of his avocation she had never thought, up to this day, except to take pride in the courage and skill which braved them. Now, however, the dangers that encompassed him came home to her soul in all their magnitude. Every fresh wail of the wind seemed his dirge. She was beginning to learn what it was to be a mariner's bride.

"Oh," she cried, wringing her hands, "if he would only come back—if he had but staid at home—I shall never, never see him again."

Once or twice, in the earlier part of the evening, a neighbor had come in to condole with her, knowing she was unaccustomed to this suspense and hoping to cheer her up. But their words as often increased her alarm, as diminished it. Insensibly their conversation would turn to tales of wreck and disaster; and, at such narrations, the young wife's tears would flow afresh. Some of these well-meaning, but injudicious friends were widows, whose garments still told of a recent bereavement; and at the sight of their dark attire, the sufferer turned away with a shudder.

Her husband should have returned, early that morning, and ought, by no means, to have delayed beyond the afternoon tide. His continued

absence, therefore, coupled with the gale that had been raging all day, was well calculated to alarm her; and her neighbors, even when they uttered words of consolation, felt there was more to fear than to hope.

"James, James," she cried, passionately, as the night wore on, "do you yet live, or are you already numbered with the dead? Oh! is my short dream of happiness to be thus broken forever?"

The hours wore on. About midnight the gale began to abate. When the rain had ceased, and the clouds began to dissipate, the young wife, unable longer to endure her suspense, left the cottage and hurried down to the shore. The little land-locked bay was comparatively still, but the noise of the surf could be heard on the rocks outside; and her heart quaked as she listened to the sound. Sitting down on a piece of fallen cliff, her shawl thrown loosely around her, she watched the entrance of the tiny harbor, where she knew his sail would first appear, if it ever appeared at all: but her anxious watch was in vain.

Hour passed after hour. The swell at her feet subsided; the wind sank to a calm; the clouds slowly dissipated; and the crescent moon, heralding the approach of day, hung in the western sky. Yet still the mariner's bride watched unrewarded. Her once bright eyes were now sad with many tears, and her hair hung damp and disheveled over her shoulders.

"It is in vain—it is vain," she sobbed, at last, after a silence of hours, "he will never come back. God help me!"

She flung herself exhausted on the flinty beach, as she spoke, and for a few moments almost prayed to die. But the sinful wish was conquered, and after an agony of woe, she rose feebly to her feet, intending to return homeward, for the rosy dawn was beginning to redder, and

she wished to escape observation and sympathy, in order to weep alone.

As she cast a last look seaward, something danced for a moment between her and the glowing horizon. Was it a sail? She sprang upon a rock, and shading her eyes with her hand, gazed eagerly for the reappearance of that dim, distant speck.

It was a sail. Yes! there it rose. And now it dipped again, beautiful as the wing of a sea-gull. Already she had learned to distinguish objects on the water, and she knew that this was a fisherman's sail.

"Oh! if it is but James," she cried, eagerly, clasping her hands. "Father in heaven," and she raised her streaming eyes above, "let it be my husband."

Nearer and nearer the sail approached, and was now observed heading straight for the harbor. Half an hour more of suspense, and then—joy! joy!—she recognized her husband's craft.

He saw her, as she stood there, and steering directly for the spot, was soon at her side and clasping her in his arms. "Dear one," he cried, "were you so anxious? The storm blew us to sea, or we should have been home yesterday. But you see I am safe now."

"Thank God," she said: and then fainted away.

It was the first of many similar trials. Alas! how little do wives, whose husbands pursue their avocations on land, know of the anxieties of a MARINER'S BRIDE.

ALICE VERNON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "DORA ATHERTON," &C.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18.

ISABEL did not have to wait long to put her plan into execution. At a comparatively early hour, that morning, Randolph called. Leaving him alone with Alice, she repaired to the library, where, soon after, Mr. Vernon came in from his forenoon walk.

He missed immediately the light form of Alice, who was usually at hand to give him his slippers, and wheel the large chair to the glowing fire.

"Where is Elsie?" he asked.

The father never called his eldest daughter anything but Isabel, but nearly always employed pet names for Alice.

"Where is Elsie," he repeated, "the idle little baggage?"

"In the drawing-room with Mr. Randolph."

Something in the tone of the speaker made him turn and look at her intensely: and the look by no means removed the suspicions so suddenly aroused.

"With Mr. Randolph! Pray did he not ask for you too?"

"No, sir!"

"Isabel, what does this mean?" And he spoke excitedly. "Is he trying to wheedle Alice into an engagement? I have noticed his being here a good deal, but I thought you were his favorite, and so gave myself no concern about the matter; for I knew you were able to take care of yourself. But Alice, young, susceptible thing!—I will go into the drawing-room immediately."

Isabel, however, interposed.

"But, papa," she said, "don't, for your own sake, do that. It hasn't gone as far as you think. If you disapprove of his visits leave me to manage the affair. We women, you know, have a tact in such matters."

"You are right. I should only make a fool of myself."

"No, papa, not that. But you might get entangled in a quarrel."

"The young scoundrel. Trying to entrap that poor child, and all for her money."

"Perhaps not, papa."

Mr. Vernon glanced keenly at his daughter from between his shaggy brows. But the dissimulation of Isabel was perfect.

"You need not attempt to defend him," he said, testily. "He has fascinated all of you, I believe."

"Not me, papa."

The smile of scorn, the contemptuous tone—how well acted they were!

He looked at her fixedly, and smiled in turn.

"I believe you. A poor man *you* would never marry, though he talked poetry by the hour." And he remained silent for awhile, gazing abstractedly into the fire. Isabel looked at him, from under her drooped eyelashes, and her countenance grew sinister, for she divined something of his thoughts. He was musing, in truth, on the difference between his daughters; and the result was not complimentary to the elder.

At last he looked suddenly up.

"I leave it to you, but you must act at once," he said, decidedly. "Go into the drawing-room. Alice must not be left alone with him."

Isabel rose, and departed. She had no sooner left the room, than Mr. Vernon started impatiently from his chair, and began walking nervously up and down the library.

"Poor Elsie, poor child," he said, "I hope she does not like the fellow. And yet she is so impressible, and the scoundrel is really clever. What a fool the old judge was to invest his all in that bank stock! These sons of families once wealthy are fortune-hunters, every one of them, and this fellow is no better than the rest, for its Isabel he loves, only he knows he can't get her, the sneaking villain!"

For half an hour, the excited old man continued muttering, walking to and fro: but finally he flung himself again into his chair, and moodily gazed into the fire. Once or twice he looked at his watch impatiently.

At last Isabel entered the room, calm, and beautiful as ever.

"Well!"

"Alice has gone up to her room."

"Humph! And did you tell him?"

Isabel smiled.

"Not in so many words, papa. But he understands nevertheless."

"And Alice!"

"She is crying, I suspect."

Isabel knew her father's character well, when she hazarded these words.

"Crying! So she has made a fool of herself. Curse the dog."

"Nay, papa."

"Well, I can't help it: he's a pitiful scoundrel: couldn't he let the poor child alone? Do you think she loves him?"

"You ought to know, pa, how it is with young girls, especially susceptible ones like sis. They think a fancy is a passion: but in a week they forget all."

"Do you say so?" He spoke gloomy. He did not like to think this of Alice even to console his fears. In his secret heart he had believed that his darling loved him better than did Isabel; but if this was true of her, she was deceiving herself. He was not convinced however.

"Do you say so?" he repeated.

"Sister belongs to the demonstrative class, you know, papa. She feels, or thinks she feels acutely, for a little time. But when she grows older, her character will become steadier of course."

Again he winced. And yet the words had their effect. They hardened Mr. Vernon's heart against his offending daughter, and determined him to disregard any grief she might exhibit and this was what the speaker desired.

But had Isabel really spoken to Randolph? Not a word. With Alice, however, she had exchanged a few short, sharp sentences, which had sent the poor girl in tears to her chamber; for it was part of the scheme to make her embarrassed in her father's presence, which nothing would effect so well, she knew, as a consciousness of his displeasure. With her usual manner, Alice would have been prattling at her father's knee and would have destroyed all: there was nothing Isabel dreaded more than a mutual confidence between them.

"He is very angry," she had said. "Don't trust yourself with a word, or it may lead to an outbreak: and if he was once to say that you should not have Randolph, I could not, in conscience, go on."

"Oh, no, no. I won't speak at all. And yet how shall I go in to dinner, and he looking angry? I will almost kill me." And she burst into tears.

"Tut, tut, little one," said Isabel. "Cheer up, for all will yet go well. Only follow my advice. I have told Randolph to come, after dinner, when pa is out; and then he and I will settle what is best. Pa can't be angry long with any one, you know," and she added, gaily "hurricane-like, its soon over."

Alice smiled faintly. "I hope it will be so," she said, timidly.

"Little coward!" And Isabel playfully tapped her sister's cheek. "There, go up stairs and wash your eyes. I'll go back to pa and talk him into a good humor."

When Alice came down to dinner, her father looked up at her at first in his natural manner, but her inflamed eyes seemed to recall something he had forgotten, and his face grew stern and cold. The poor girl shrank back, and silently took her seat, instead of kissing him as was her custom. The meal passed in constraint. Isabel pretended to make efforts to keep up a conversation; but it was in vain. Her father answered shortly, and scarcely looked up from his plate. Alice could hardly restrain her tears. Once or twice she glanced timidly at her parent, but his eyes never met hers, and well it was so, for the stern face alone almost made her sob aloud.

As soon as the meal was concluded, Mr. Vernon left the table, instead of lingering over his wine as usual. The outer door had not closed on him when Alice gave way to hysterical weeping.

"Oh! sister," she sobbed, "will he forgive me? Do you think he will? Oughtn't I to give up Randolph at once?"

"What a foolish child! Don't you know papa? It will all be over in a week, or would be," and she spoke, as if hesitatingly, "were anger useless."

The tone, more than the words arrested Alice. She checked her sobs partially, and looked earnestly at Isabel.

"What do you mean?"

"If I was in your place I should elope with Randolph."

"Oh! Bella."

Alice was white as death.

"Yes, for when the thing was done, pa would forgive you. But his consent first you never will get."

"But it would be so wicked."

"And yet, if you don't do it, he'll maybe forbid the thing positively, and then you'll have to disobey him openly, or give up Randolph."

"Oh! I'll give up Randolph." And she clasped her hands.

"Can you?"

Alice burst into tears afresh.

"What shall I, shall I do? It seems so wrong. And yet give up Randolph! Do you think he would care much, sister? Would it break his heart?"

The question was so sudden, so unexpected, that Isabel started; and again that livid hue overspread her face. It was gone, however, in a scowl.

"He would never forgive you. Nor, if I were he, would I. Only think of it. His happiness depends on your faithfulness; you have no right,

you see, to consult yourself solely: pa, too, will forgive, which Randolph could not, and should not."

"But would pa forgive? He has been so kind; and this seems so wicked: to marry, and not even ask him."

"There it is again. Going back over the old track. Alice, you were never intended to reason: you should leave that to others; and leave it now to Randolph and me. Don't you see? Its plain enough. If you elope, pa will be angry at first, but he'll soon receive you back, and we'll all live here happily together. But if you wait for his consent, you'll wait till eternity. Its his way."

"I know it." She spoke despondingly. Then, suddenly, she looked up. "Oh! if I wasn't such a coward, maybe if, I'd go to pa, and tell him my heart would break—his little Elsie's—he'd consent——"

"He'd tell you never to mention Randolph's name again. He'd forbid you ever thinking of him."

"So he would, so he would," sobbed Alice, burying her face in her hands, "I think I see him now."

Isabel regarded her for a moment.

"Alice," she said, at last, and she spoke soothingly. "Can't you trust your elder sister, your second mother almost? And if I should consent, in your name, to Randolph's pleadings, for I know he will plead for it, will you elope with him?"

"I will do what you think best. Yes, yes!" And the sobs became convulsive. "But oh! how unhappy I am."

"Then come up stairs with me, pet; lie down while I read to you; and when Randolph comes I'll talk it all over with him. I only want to see you happy."

"Oh! lying words. Oh! wily temptress. Oh! sister traitress to the holy tie of sisterhood."

They went up together: and, while Alice lay on the bed, wearied and weeping, Isabel read to her—what? Not the Bible. Not that sacred commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother." But the wild, impassioned poetry of Shakespeare's impassioned Juliet.

At last, exhausted by her mental and moral struggles, Alice slept, the soft murmur of her sister's voice rising and falling in her dreams, like the low sound of a fountain by moonlight.

When Randolph was announced, Isabel, without awakening her sister, descended to see him.

She found him pacing the drawing-room, to and fro, in much excitement. He came forward immediately and eagerly seized her hand.

"I have been unable to keep still for a moment," he said, "since I left you. Of all things

suspense is most intolerable to me: I think I could meet death itself better than endure the doubts of a trial. But how is my sweet Alice?"

"She is sleeping. The poor child is exhausted. Suspense is killing her too."

"Ah!" And he began again to pace the room. Suddenly he turned to Isabel, took both her hands, and gazed eagerly into her eyes. "Tell us what to do, dear Miss Vernon," he said. "My own impulses are to go, at once, to your father; to tell him I will wait for Alice even as Jacob did for Rachel; but to beseech him not to forbid me to hope. These are my own impulses, I say. But dear Alice seems to think that if I do this, Mr. Vernon will forbid our meeting; and she declares that she cannot, and will not go in the face of a direct command of his."

At the clasp of those two hands, at the eager gaze of those eyes, Isabel's heart had thrilled, and all the woman trembled within her. But she remembered all, and hardened her soul. Ay! hardened it the more for what was to her, though unsuspected by Randolph, the mockery of that look and clasp.

"Alice is right," she said. "I did but hint to papa, this morning, something of the truth, and he would have broken into the drawing room at once. You may imagine what would have happened."

The eyes of Randolph flashed, and the hot blood mounted to his forehead. How Isabel exulted at these signs of the rage and shame of a heart only less proud than her own! He seemed about to speak, but bit his lip, and was silent, dropping her hand, however, and striding up and down, like a chafed lion, till he had partly conquered his anger.

"I am of as good blood as he is," he said, at length. "I was once as rich. In ten years I shall be famous, as I feel here," and he struck his forehead with his clenched hand. "God, what a curse it is to be poor!"

In a few moments, however, he grew entirely calm. He stopped before Isabel, who looked half displeased, and drew herself coldly up.

"Pardon me, dear Miss Vernon," he said. "I forgot that I was speaking of your father. But oh! you don't know, you can't know the tortures of a proud spirit, beset with poverty. There, you forgive me. I see you do. It is like your noble nature. And now complete your kindness," and he sat down by her again, "and advise us what to do. There is not one out of a thousand who has a clearer judgment."

She returned his gaze calmly and imperturbably, not a muscle of her face flinching. And yet what a whirlpool of emotions—love, revenge, hate, conflicting with and stimulating each other—raged in that relentless bosom! Only, for one

moment, a darkness passed over her face, like the shadow cast by the swift wing of the lost archangel.

How little Randolph suspected the truth! How sternly, if he had, he would have turned from her! But giving himself up, unsuspectingly, to her guidance, he listened, as she said,

"I cannot, you know, advise you, Mr. Randolph. Only this suspense, as I told you, will kill Alice if protracted. I think she and you ought to decide for yourselves. But," and she hesitated, then hastily resumed, "from what I know of pa, he is, I think, more likely to forgive an elopement than to grant his consent."

Again the face of Randolph flushed, and his eye flashed. He muttered as in a soliloquy,

"An elopement! And yet that seems so mean. To steal into a man's house and betray his confidence by running off with his daughter.

Isabel glanced at him covertly, triumphing in these visible pangs.

At last Randolph addressed her again.

"Won't it be better for me to risk an appeal to your father? Our families used to be intimate, and he ought to know," he spoke proudly, "that a Randolph could not stoop to be a fortune-hunter. I don't ask for Alice's hand now. She is willing to wait till I have earned fame and fortune; and with such a prize in view I will work as never man did before.

The exulting look, the lofty words, how grand they were! Isabel loved him more passionately than ever, and loving, hated him the deeper: and so grew deadlier in her resolution for revenge.

She shook her head; but said, "try pa, if you think best. Only, in that case," and she held out her hand, "let me bid you farewell now, for I shall never be allowed to see you again, much less poor Alice."

Randolph did not take the proffered hand. He gazed gloomily into vacancy, silent and abstracted for awhile, and then, suddenly starting up, cried, "it must be, after all. I see that you have the coolest judgment of any of us."

Isabel looked up with one of her old smiles.

"I do not advise this step, remember! I cannot, much as I love Alice, recommend it. At most I can only tacitly consent."

Randolph stopped before her, "I shall never forget your kindness," he said, feelingly.

He paused a few moments, and then resumed, "Will you talk to Alice for me? I hope she also will see the necessity of an elopement. And it ought to take place at once. Your father might, even to-night, forbid her even to speak to me again. Dear Miss Vernon, will you complete the obligations, under which I lie to you, by closing this?"

"I really ought not. But I cannot see Alice

killed outright. I can plead, too, for you, with pa, after the thing is done. Well, well, I suppose I must. Only," and she rose with a gay smile, "don't you and Alice look so sorrowful, for such things happen every day: 'the course of true love,' you know, 'never did run smooth.' I will be back directly."

She soon reappeared with Alice, the latter blushing and hanging back, the tears starting in her eyes. Isabel left the lovers together, first kissing his sister, and whispering in her ear, "cheer up, all will go right yet, only don't begin an engagement by disobeying your liege lord."

Half an hour after, Randolph left the house, and Alice tripped lightly up stairs. Isabel was waiting for her in their own room.

"Bella, dearest," she cried, flying in, and flinging her arms around her sister's neck, "it's all fixed, and so nicely too—I didn't think of the plan till George suggested it. The elopement I would not hear of; it seemed too wicked to pa; and George, I don't think, thought it exactly right either: so he proposed at last that we should be privately married. I to come home here immediately after, and the secret is to be kept: but, by-and-bye, when George becomes famous, as you know he will, he is to claim me. Pa, you see, can't call him a fortune-hunter then——"

"But," said Isabel, sharply, for this scheme threatened to thwart her revenge, "why a concealed marriage? You might as well leave things as they are."

"Oh! no," and Alice blushed rosily, even though she turned aside her face, "for George would not have been contented. But he says if I am married to him, he can do without seeing me, for a whole year at a time, if necessary—that he won't get jealous—you know, Bell, what men are!"

Isabel answered coldly, though she began to see already how this private marriage, properly divulged, would answer her ends as well as an elopement. "Well, Alice, you know best, and I am glad to see you happy. Only you mustn't ask my advice. For your sake and George's, I must be able to tell pa that I was not a party to it, or else, you know, all I can say will have no effect on him."

For an instant Alice looked earnestly at her sister. To her pure heart, to know of the affair, yet conceal it, was the same as being actively a party to it: and, for a moment, a half-formed, suspicion, she hardly knew of what, flashed across her mind. But it passed as quickly as it came. Isabel, however, understood that fleeting expression; and it stung her with rage.

"That is just like you, always good to your poor Alice." And now only joy, and sisterly

affection shone in the face of the speaker. "But I must go. I promised George to meet him in half an hour, so that I might be back before pa comes home. Oh! if I could only have you with me."

Isabel assisted to arrange Alice's shawl, tied the bonnet strings, and then, telling the flurried girl, she never looked prettier, gaily pushed her out of the chamber door, jestingly saying she should send to the confectioner's, and have some private bride-cake ready for her return.

But when that light form had floated, like a summer cloud, from out the room; when Isabel, looking suspiciously around, saw herself really alone; then the smile faded, and a gleam of bitter, bitter hate rose to her countenance, gradually overspreading it. Not a word, however, passed the rigid lips. She did not move from her seat either. But there she sat, livid and stone-like, scarcely seeming to breathe, with no outward sign of emotion but a nervous clasp and unclasping of the fingers of her right hand, which rested on a little work-table beside her.

The twilight was closing in, when Alice returned. The excitement, which had supported her when she went out, had now fled; her cheek was pale as death; and her large eyes had a wild, frightened look. She rushed up to Isabel, flung herself on her knee, and throwing her arms about her sister, burst into tears.

"Oh! its done, its done, but I wish I was dead," she sobbed. "I feel like a thief coming back here."

"You are nervous. All brides are, Alice. Come, look up, don't be down-hearted, bathe your eyes, here's my bottle of sal-volatile. Recollect, you have to meet papa at tea directly, and if you don't compose yourself, he may ask ugly questions."

And so, with words and caresses, the arch-traitoress soothed her sister, till Alice only sobbed, now and then, like a child that has cried itself to sleep.

"Oh! if I had known how I should have felt," said Alice, "I never could have undertaken it. The church was so empty and cold; everything was so strange; it was away off in the suburbs, lest we should be known. And then the rector was so long in making out my certificate."

"I never saw one. Where is it?"

Alice drew it from her bosom. Isabel walking to the window, pretended to read it.

"It's too dark," she said. "I must wait till we retire. And there is pa's key in the front door." She returned the paper to Alice as she spoke. "I will hurry down to meet him, or he will be coming up here. Wash your eyes well, before you follow."

Alice entered the tea-room like a condemned

criminal, for she felt that her father's eyes were on her: and she could not meet them.

The evening passed miserably. On every side there was constraint. It was, therefore, a relief to Alice, when the clock struck the hour for retiring. Mustering all her courage, she approached her father, as usual, to proffer a good night kiss. But he only bent his forehead to her gravely, instead of offering his lips. Poor Alice restrained herself till she left the room. But the events of the day had been too much for her; her whole nervous system was shattered; and when she gained her own chamber, she flung herself on the bed and sobbed as if her heart was breaking.

Isabel hung over her, endeavoring to console her, now with words, now with caresses. At last, Alice grew more composed.

"I will leave you for a minute, dearest," said Isabel. "I left my work-box down stairs."

It was not for her work-box only that she went; but to execute a plan, which she had been resolving all the evening. She knew that her father's custom was to visit the smoking-room, after she and Alice had retired, and having smoked his cigar, to return for a few minutes to the library, to see that all was right before he himself sought his chamber. She had observed that Alice, in her nervous excitement, had returned her marriage certificate to her bosom. If this document could be obtained, and placed on the library floor, as if dropped there, it would meet her father's eye: and then the explosion, which Isabel calculated on, would be sure to occur, without any apparent agency of her own. But how was the certificate to be obtained without suspicion? From this dilemma, she was relieved by the hysterical emotion of Alice. While caressing her sister, she had extracted the certificate from the bosom of the unconscious girl; and it was to deposit the fatal document on the floor of the library, that she now descended.

In a few minutes she reappeared, work-box in hand. Alice was still sobbing on the bed, and did not observe the deadly pallor of her sister's cheek. Isabel knew that the denouement might be expected every instant, and her whole frame trembled with nervous excitement.

"Alice dear," at last she said, feeling that she must say something, or shriek.

Her voice was thick and husky. The poor, wearied girl, however, did not notice this; but looked up, with a sad, oh! such a sad air.

"You had better undress, love," continued Isabel, "sleep will compose your nerves. Shall I—"

But her words were cut short, by her father's voice, speaking loud and angrily, followed by his steps hastily ascending the staircase.

Alice seemed to have an intuitive sense of her peril, though ignorant of its immediate cause, and springing to her feet, fixed her large eyes in terror on the door, like those of a frightened fawn.

"Oh! Bella," she cried. But her tongue clove to her mouth; she could not go on; and pressing both hands on her heart, she stood pale and trembling, her lips parted, the perspiration starting on her forehead.

Isabel was unnaturally calm. The crisis, whose approach had so unnerved her, found her, now that it had come, hard as adamant.

Nevertheless she did not speak. It was but a moment before the angry parent, pouring forth a torrent of oaths as he came, reached the door, which he burst open with a single blow of his foot.

Neither of his daughters had ever seen him as he looked then. They knew he had violent passions, for he had occasionally been angry at the servants; but even Isabel caught her breath, on beholding him now.

He rushed up to Alice, thrusting aside the elder daughter, who would have interposed; and seizing the offender with one arm, rudely shook her, while he held her marriage certificate up before her astounded eyes.

"What—what—does this mean?" And he shouted, rather than spoke, stammering with rage. Indeed his whole demeanor was that of a maniac. "Speak—are you dumb—"

Alice's first action, on seeing the fatal paper, had been instinctively to place her hand in her bosom, where she had supposed the certificate to be. Not finding it there, her lips had parted as if to shriek; but no sound came from them, for terror paralyzed her.

Her father shook her more violently than before.

"Answer me—I'll have an answer—is this true?—are you really married?"

Still she could not speak. She only gazed, wild with fear, at the livid face of her parent.

Suddenly he flung her from him: and turned sternly to Isabel.

"I found this on the library floor," he said. "It is a certificate of marriage between that girl and her paramour—"

"Oh! father—" began Isabel.

But he silenced her by a gesture, and went on, after a bitter oath,

"From this moment I disown her. Hereafter she is no child of mine. I will not turn her into the street at this late hour, but to-morrow morning, the earlier the better, get her clothing together, put her and it into a hackney-coach, and send them to that mercenary scoundrel."

Alice started forward at these words, with a courage born by despair, and flinging herself at her father's feet, endeavored to clasp his knees.

"Oh! papa—"

But he hurled her from him.

"Damn you," he said, and the words were like the snarl of a wild beast, "do you think you can wrong me in this way, and then, with a few tears and pretty speeches, cozen me into forgiving. Never, so help me God!"

With a moan, as when the arrow pierces the heart of a dove, Alice fell back rigid, and apparently dead.

Isabel rushed toward her. Even the cruel heart of the elder sister, the author of all this misery, was moved.

"You have killed her," she cried, kneeling, and looking up at her father, "oh! how could you—"

Mr. Vernon had staggered, his hand on the door-knob, his face lately so livid now pale as a sheet. But seeing Alice stir, he recovered himself.

"Not a word." He scowled at Isabel, as he spoke, as though he would disown her too, if she gave him the slightest excuse for it; and then, after a pause, he added, "remember, she goes to-morrow."

Closing the door behind him with a bang, he descended the stairs and entered the library, where Isabel heard him walking to and fro, till long after midnight.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

LINA THORNTON'S HOUSEKEEPING.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

A HAPPY woman was dear, fussy Mrs. Wharton, as she walked over the magnificent velvet carpets, picking up a tack here and there, left by the upholsterers; drawing the lace window curtains in more graceful folds; or arranging and rearranging the *bijoutrie* on the tea-poy and *elegar*.

Yes, she was in the most blissful state of excitement. The grand wish of her life was accomplished, for Lina, her pretty daughter Lina, was actually married, and married too into "one of the first families." Upon the achievement of so great an object, the mamma had coaxed the papa into buying a handsome house in the fashionable quarter of the city, and to give her *carte blanche* for furnishing it.

Lina had plead in vain, in her sweet way, for a smaller home;—"what did Frank and herself want with such an immense place, and only two of them?" asked she, with a smile and a blush, as visions of a cozy little house, illumined by the rays of the honeymoon, rose before her.

But it was of no use. Her daughter, without an effort, had here an opportunity of quietly stepping within the charmed circle of the aristocracy *par excellence*, which the mother had only dared to long for; so poor Lina was to be victimized with a big house, that it might in some degree compensate to the terrible world, for the *parvenue* blood she brought into it.

Lina had sometimes wished that Frank Thornton had been just a little poor, that she might have made some sacrifice for him, but unfortunately for Lina's romantic, loving, little heart, he was a lawyer with a handsome inheritance, and nearly as rich as herself. He had married her for pure love.

Mrs. Wharton was now anxiously awaiting the return of the young couple from their bridal trip; for she had a great surprise in store for Lina.

The pretty young bride at length arrived and declared the arrangement of the house perfect; "but," said she, with a rueful face, on her way to the kitchen, "oh, mamma, these servants, what shall I do?"

But as she opened the door, with what a cry of delight did she recognize black Nancy, her mother's cook.

Nancy's grey colored handkerchief was wound

around her head in the most picturesque folds; her dark blue dress was perfectly glossy with ironing, and her snowy linen apron had undergone all the complicated mysteries of folding, of a Newport napkin.

As Lina entered, Nancy dropped one of her best courtesies, and her deep, contented laugh could be heard over half the house, as she said, "I guess you didn't 'speek to see *me* here, Miss Lina, did you? But Misses thought you didn't know nuffin' 't all, honey; so you sees, she gied me up to you. How you like it, Miss Lina? ha! ha!"

Lina's heart was at rest now. There would have to be no ordering of breakfast, dinner, or supper. Nancy was as regular as clock-work, and knew everybody's appetites better than they did themselves.

In the midst of Lina's delight, however, she thought of her father. "But, mamma," said she, "what will papa do without Nancy? I am afraid he will never have another dinner to suit him, he is so very particular, you know. And then no one *can* dress terrapin or lobster to suit him!"

"It will be a great deal easier for me to instruct a cook than yourself, Lina, and your father seemed perfectly willing to part with Nancy," said her mother.

In the mornings, Lina might be seen through the open windows of the parlor, arranging the drapery of the curtains, altering the position of a lounging chair, or dusting the knick-knacks with a brush of gay feathers, her little hands encased in a pair of white, cast-off gloves, which she had worn at the Opera, or a party the evening before. And poor Lina called this housekeeping.

One morning, when Mrs. Thornton was dressing to go out, Nancy knocked at her chamber door, and as Lina admitted her, she observed with some trepidation, that the handkerchief around her head stood an inch or two higher than usual. This was ominous. Nancy's handkerchief always rose with her courage.

"Mr. Thornton and you 's going travelling this summer, ain't you, Misses?" said the cook.

"Yes, Nancy, but I cannot tell when, precisely," was the reply.

"Well, Miss Lina, I thought if you could 'range it so as to go next week 't would suit all hands; for you sees, honey, I wants to go to camp-meeting

then, over de river. There's been a great revival in our church, and Mr. Parker, he says we ought to do all we can to keep it up."

"Well, Nancy, but I do not know that Mr. Thornton can leave home then; I will ask him, though."

"Yes, Miss, if you please, Miss. I 'spose I could git somebody to stay in my place for a week, but then you sees they would be strange to your ways; and bless your heart, honey, you couldn't teach 'em; you don't know no more 'n a little kitten yourself."

Lina felt this to be true, and in despair said she would endeavor to arrange it so that they should be from home during Nancy's absence; for she found she was determined to go.

"Thank you, Miss; I believe Betsey, she's a going too; for we thought Jane might do the chamber work; for a waiter-girl don't have much to do."

"I have no objection, Nancy, if Mr. Thornton and myself go away."

Nancy made a deep curtsie and left the room, while Lina put on her bonnet and hurried to her mother's.

"Oh, mamma, what shall I do?" exclaimed she, "Nancy says she is going to camp-meeting, and Betsey too; and that Frank and myself had better go away at the same time. She seems to have made up her mind about it, so there is no use of endeavoring to bribe her out of it."

"Well, my dear," replied Mrs. Wharton, "if Nancy has made up her mind, she *will* go, so you had better give your permission the best way you can; she is too valuable a woman to lose. I had to compromise with her myself, sometimes. We are going out to 'the place,' in a day or so, or else Frank and yourself might come here, if his business detains him in town."

Lina went home, and nervously awaited her husband's arrival. He quieted her troubles, however, by saying he could easily leave his business at the time, so that Nancy and Betsey could go to camp-meeting, and Jane stay and take care of the house.

But alas for Lina's calculations! Nancy and Betsey had but fairly started, and Lina put on her travelling-dress for her own departure, when Frank entered with a vexed air.

"Lina," said he, "I fear we shall not be able to go till to-morrow or the day after. There is some most unexpected business which must be attended to. I am sorry, dearest, but one day can't make much difference."

So reasons a man. Lina's face grew perfectly blank. What should she do? "Probably Jane can cook a very simple dinner," thought she, so down stairs she hurried.

But Jane looked grum. She did not fancy

being left at home, "when Nancy and Betsey were pleasuring."

"And as to a custard, Mrs. Thornton," said she, after Lina had given her orders, "I never made one in my life. If you will show me how, ma'am, maybe I could do it," continued she, insolently, for she well knew that Lina knew no more about making a pudding than Queen Victoria did.

Lina said she was too busy; so they went without a dessert that day, and dined off a salad; half cooked potatoes, and a burned beefsteak.

Frank's business still detained him in the city; and in a couple of days Jane was in open rebellion.

"She wasn't a going to be made a nigger slave of for nobody," said she to Lina, one morning, after she had been injudiciously asked to sweep the halls, scrub the front steps, go to market, do the chamber-work, cook the dinner, and run of errands.

Lina never for a moment thought she was giving to one girl the work three had been accustomed to do.

"I guess she thinks I'm a slave from Georgy," muttered Jane, as Lina left the room.

Frank entered at that moment. "Jane how dare you to speak so of your mistress," said he, "If you do it again, remember, you leave the house."

"I guess I'll leave any how. It's a most time when the men comes a coting about," was the reply.

Frank almost choked with anger. "If you are not out of this house in ten minutes time I will kick you out," he said, with some effort of calmness.

"Oh, Frank, how could you?" asked Lina, with tears, after Jane had gone. "What shall we do? Mamma is out of town, and the house closed. And where to get a soul to do the work I don't know."

"Why, my dear, don't let that trouble you. There are hundreds of servants to be had. You know there are applications at the door every hour of the day."

But Lina had an instinctive idea that servants were not so easily to be had, particularly if they were wanted very much.

Mr. Thornton dined at a *restaurant* that day, and Lina's fare was nothing more substantial than a piece of sponge cake and some preserves.

At last the Intelligence Office was thought of, and, as Frank had predicted, scores of girls called in want of places.

But Lina was no better off. Some were unwilling to take a situation for so short a time. Another who "wasn't bounded to go to service," wanted "the privilege of two afternoons with

tea," in the week. Another said she couldn't think of cleaning the front. She had always lived with quality folks, who had a man to do that. Others had all the virtues under the sun, but when they found they would have all the work to do in so large a house, for four or five days, "guessed the place wouldn't suit."

There was no prospect of getting away either; for Frank's business became more complicated than he had anticipated; so poor Lina cried herself to sleep that night, after forgetting to close the house before retiring.

The next morning she arose, utterly sick with worryment. Her husband and herself had gone to a confectioner's and got coffee and muffins the night before, but she felt ashamed of not being able to get one meal herself. "I surely can make a cup of coffee," thought she, as she was selecting a dress suitable to play kitchen-maid in. Her wardrobe was full of morning dresses, which a countess might have envied, got up for a *dejeuner* at Saratoga, but there was not one which would look quite in place in her kitchen. At last she fixed upon a white cambric, elaborately trimmed with edging, worth at least a dollar and a half a yard, as the plainest of the set, and tying a black silk apron over it, she noiselessly slipped out of the room.

Lina had dressed very quietly in order not to awake her husband, yet she felt vexed enough to cry when she found he still slept on; it seemed such an utter disregard of her troubles.

But when she reached the kitchen she sat down in despair. The fire in the range had been neglected, and was entirely out; she knew as much about kindling one in Etna, as there. At length Lina espied in an out kitchen a small furnace, which had been bought for Nancy's preserving. She thought there was a barrel of charcoal in the cellar, and had a vague idea that it ignited easily.

She was not particular now about her hands, and after putting the coal on the hearth, she wiped them on her dress. A match was now applied to the charcoal, but of course without effect; it was repeated over and over again with no better success. Lina then got some paper, but the paper burned out before the coal kindled.

She gave it up in despair, and sat down on the hearth, white wrapper and all, and took a hearty cry.

The kitchen blinds were turned, and Lina had been watched from an upper window of the next house, by the chamber-maid, with both pity and amusement.

"Bridget, I say," called the girl to another servant, "can't you go in next door and make a fire for the poor little cratur there, that's crying her eyes out, jist? Sure she niver did

a hand's turn in her life! The saints protect her!"

Lina overheard the conversation, and in a few minutes the good-hearted Irish girl knocked at the back gate, and when it was opened she said, with the delicacy of good feeling, "I knew, mam, your girl had left you, so I thought I would jist step in and see if I could make a fire, or any thing, as I thought you didn't look very strong, like."

Lina thanked her from the bottom of her heart, and stood watching the operation with more anxiety than she had evinced when trying to catch the Scottish step from her dancing master.

"Can you tell me of a girl I can get for a few days, till my own comes back?" she asked of Bridget.

"I know of one, mam, but she isn't jist used to the ways in this country; she has never lived at service, mam."

"No matter for that," was the reply, "if she can only make fires and coffee, and do the roughest part of the work, I shall be satisfied."

"Now, mam, if you will tell me where the kettle is I will fill it, for it will be too heavy jist for the likes of you to lift."

The kettle was filled and put on the fire; and Bridget departed, promising to send a servant to Mrs. Thornton that afternoon.

Whilst Lina was arranging the table the bell rung, and on opening the door the baker stared at the blackened face which presented itself to him.

Lina reached out her hands for the bread, but observing the color drew them back, and held up her black silk apron for it.

"The tally, too, mam, if you please."

"I do not know anything about it, you must wait till my girls come home," said Lina, ready to cry again.

The next ring brought the milk-man, and the worried little housekeeper flew into the kitchen, and got a couple of vegetable dishes to hold a quart of milk and a few cents worth of cream.

The closets were now rummaged for the coffee, and as soon as it was ground, Lina hastened to pour the water upon it, for she thought her fire was already showing symptoms of going out. The kettle upset on her feet, but as it was not nearly boiled there was no damage done. The pot was put on the fire, and Lina went up to awaken her husband. He did not notice her swollen eyes, but the white dress blackened with coal, and the black apron whitened with the dry flour from the bread, presented such a spectacle that he broke into a hearty laugh. This was too much. Hadn't he been sleeping comfortably whilst she was worrying her life out; and Lina cried again harder than ever.

Frank soothed her as well as he could; asked her why she had not called him; and said he had no doubt he should enjoy a breakfast without meat just as well as if he had it.

Now Frank loved a cup of good coffee above all things; so he watched it as Lina poured it out, with some anxiety. It did not look very promising, to be sure, and when he had tasted it he thought it better to take the whole at one swallow.

Lina's appetite had gone completely. Cooks are proverbially small eaters. She suspected, however, that the coffee was not remarkably palatable when Frank pushed his chair away, having taken only one cup. But he declared he "was not hungry that day, though the coffee was delicious."

Frank's dinner was again taken at a *restuarant*, and his wife's consisted of bread and butter, and fruit.

In the evening Bridget's friend made her appearance. She could make fires, boil potatoes, and "do the rough," but there her abilities

ceased. Very willing, but very stupid. The eggs for breakfast *wouldn't cook soft* for her; a delicious pudding, made by Bridget—who run in now and then to show her friend—was boiled in a pot of soup "to give it a flavor, jist;" peas cooked in the pod; and blunders enough committed to have driven Nancy mad.

Lina declared if she ever had a daughter, she should learn cooking before she did her letters; and when Nancy and Betsey returned, whom their mistress could almost have kissed for joy, Lina set busily, indefatigably to work to learn housekeeping.

When that great event was accomplished, and not till then, did Frank tell his wife that once upon a time he had been obliged to take a second breakfast at a confectionary, because neither the kettle nor the coffee had boiled at home.

Lina too became remarkably contented with her lot; she now had no wish to be "just a *little* poor;" for though she could take the care of the house upon herself, it must be confessed also *that she never did like it.*

THE DREAMER AND THE WORKER.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

"And when, my dear child, do you intend to quit building castles in the air?"

"Never, uncle, never! Ah! what would I do without dreaming! It seems to me I live in a world of my own."

"And pray, with what kind of creatures is your world peopled? Is the sentimental your forte, or do you prefer the heroic? You yourself are the queen in the realm, I suppose."

"Ah, no, dear uncle, that style of dreams is flown. I used to dream 'that I dwelt in marble halls,' &c., but now my visions come nearer my heart. Besides the floating shadows that form the amusement of a half hour, I have an orderly vision, if I may call it so, that I carry on from from day to day. It is a very complex one, I assure you—embraces a great many characters. And oh! I am so happy in that world! All the tenderest, dearest blessings that I long for perhaps in vain, in this, are showered upon me there. But, uncle, you are laughing at me now."

"No, my dear child, but why not show us some transcripts of this glowing clime? write down some of their delightful imaginings for us."

"No, no, uncle, I could not do that. I could not, like Lamartine, give you a portion of my own beating heart."

"Well, well, I should have no objection to all this, even though it does waste a great deal of precious time, if you did not carry your dreaming propensity into actual life. You very often merely dream of things you ought to do."

"Oh, well, dear uncle, never despair. Nothing was ever done that was not first 'dreamed' of."

"Dreamed! dreamed! I am afraid, my child, you will meet with a rough awakening."

Sixteen—sweet sixteen—Isabel Barnes was just sixteen, and can you not imagine the world of feeling and fancy that filled her heart? Rare beauty of form and face was hers, and hers was that sweet gift

"Which answers only to the far bright stars,
Which answers only to the wind and streams,
The sweet wood blossoms, and the moon's pale beams."

She was a dreamer in every sense of the word, and this gave no small uneasiness to her sober Uncle Everett, in whose affections the child of his dead sister held a place not less sacred than that of his own Mary.

Isabel's school vacations were generally passed with her cousin, as she cared not to return to her New York home, where her step-mother now was mistress. Her father was too much immersed in business to give much time to her, and readily consented to this arrangement. Her two brothers, Howard and Edward, usually paid a visit to their uncle at the time she was there.

Soon after the above conversation Mary Everett and Isabel returned to school. With sadness they went, for they felt that their last vacation was over. The next time they saw the lovely village of Morristown, they would be no longer school girls, but beings before whom lay the great problem of life, which each in her own way must work out—ay, *must*, for earth suffers not her children to turn back or shrink. When once the golden gates of childhood have closed behind them, they must plunge into the rushing stream and share the strife. I know not why it is, but much is said about the interesting position of young men at the opening of life's dream, and they themselves are allowed the credit of reflecting very deeply upon it, while all seem to forget that the other sex share the same circumstances, and, therefore, the same feelings. For the first time they look upon life as a whole—for the first time they trace a pathway through it with other eyes than those of vague and dreaming hope, and sad indeed is the heart that feels that the strongest link that bound it to childhood's careless days is broken, and feels too its own unfitness to meet that which is to come.

Many a plan for their future course did Mary and Isabel lay. The latter's path seemed very plain—it was pointed out by the wasted finger of a dying mother. For Isabel, volatile and dreaming as she was, had that knowledge which her spherer Cousin Mary lacked—that knowledge taught by the first deep grief—by the sense of the eternal change that has then passed over the heart, which can never, nevermore be as that of those who has never known grief. Isabel had stood by a dying mother's bed, and heard the faltering words that told her of her responsibility as the only sister of two young brothers, and the only daughter of a care-worn father. And for a time she had not neglected to preserve and heighten the great influence she held over her brothers, nor relaxed in her affectionate attentions to her remaining parent. But soon

afterward she left home, and until now had had little opportunity to follow the sacred injunctions of the dying. But now—now!—how earnest were her resolutions—how bright her plans for the time when she should once more be at home.

"Well, Mary," she said, to her cousin, one day after she had been talking to her of some of these anticipations, "what are you going to do when we leave school?"

"Indeed I don't know, Bella. I can only answer you in the words of the apostle, 'do with my might whatsoever my hand findeth to do,' for I must do something. I have a perfect craving for action, Isabel. I long for the excitement of life—rushing life."

"Why, Mary?"

"I cannot tell you, Bella, but so it is, and yet how quiet is the life I shall probably lead."

Silently yet quickly the months flew on, and Isabel Barnes and Mary Everett bade farewell to school life. Mary was to spend the coming winter with her cousin in New York, and just as the cool winds of October were making Broadway bright again, they arrived there, Isabel with her dreaming plans, and Mary with her longing for excitement.

Isabel's twin brother, Howard, was then at home on his first college vacation, and eagerly did he welcome his darling sister. During his stay they were constantly together. Perfect confidence had always reigned between them. Howard's frank and generous disposition led him to confide everything to his sister, and Isabel, since her mother's death, had had none but her brother to whom she could impart her most sacred thoughts. When Howard went back to college, many were the promises exchanged of writing very frequently. "You'll have more time to write now, Bella," said Howard, "than when you were studying so hard."

"Oh, I'll write every week—tell you all the news, and you must tell me everything, everything, Howard—all you see, and do and think."

They parted very affectionately, and Isabel sat down and spent the next half hour in building a castle in the air, as fair and glittering as the Crystal Palace—a vision of love and trust—a vision illumined with a light not of earth, a radiance beaming from a mother's grave, shedding its light on the daughter's brow by reason of her obedience to that mother's dying words. Ah, that it had been something more than a dream!

One morning, not long after Howard's departure, as Isabel rose from a late breakfast, her youngest brother came into the room with an unfinished sketch in his hand, saying, "Bella, please show me about this."

"Not now, Edward, not now," said she, playfully pressing her bright lips to his forehead, "I

have not time. I must go down to the mantuamaker's. Some other day I will."

The boy looked disappointed, but left the room without saying anything.

"It would not have taken me long though, would it, Mary?" said Isabel, turning half regretfully to her cousin, "I might call him back"—but she did not do it.

"Whither bound, Molly?" she said, as she met Mary on the stairs two hours afterward.

"To call upon that lady from Philadelphia. I can't wait for you any longer, Bell."

"Oh! to be sure, I ought to have been ready long ago. I wish I could go this morning, but I can't. What have you been doing ever since breakfast?"

"Practising, *cara mia*. Did you not hear me?"

"How much you do accomplish! I wish I could sit down and go straight through with any thing as you can."

In the afternoon of the same day Isabel had taken up a novel, and was going to her room to lie down for an hour preparatory to her evening's dissipation, when her father called her from the hall,

"Here, Bell, come read to me a little while."

"Oh, indeed, papa, I cannot. I'm very sorry, but I'm too tired."

"But I've got a new book, 'Dream Life,' here. Come, you love day-dreams yourself, you know."

"Ah, dear papa, remember I've got to dance all night."

"Ah, you think more of polkas than pages, I'm afraid, Bell."

"No, no, indeed," but she bounded on up stairs, and spent the next two hours half in reading, half in dreaming—dreaming of the flatteries and sweet whispers she would hear that night.

The season was an unusually gay one, and under the chaperonage of Mrs. Barnes, who had always been kind enough to her step-daughter, Isabel and Mary entered most fully into its allurements. Mary Everett, without possessing the striking beauty, or sweet, winning manners of her cousin, was still a very pretty girl, with a slight vein of sarcasm running through her conversation, which made her very piquant and attractive to the young fashionables that lounged on the sofas of Mr. Barnes, and talked of the new prima-donna, and the last fancy ball. Mary danced and flirted, and chattered nonsense as eagerly as any, acting on her usual principle of entering into everything with her whole soul; but this, even combined with her regular fulfilment of her few duties, satisfied only for a time her craving for action. She envied her Cousin Isabel the golden opportunities she was daily throwing from her. Isabel was carried away by

the stream of gayety, and forgetting her fond dreams, wrote very irregularly to her brother. Howard felt hurt, and said so in his letters, and then Isabel would resolve to do differently; but on went the days and weeks, and still it was only in dreams that she did anything to retain the affection and confidence of her twin brother. Her brother Edward was younger than herself—a quiet, thoughtful boy of fourteen. He was naturally very reserved, but his motherless heart had sprung eagerly toward his sister, on her return home, and she could have won him to be almost anything she chose if she had only been true to herself and him. Her affectionate ways kept the door of his heart open to her far longer than it would otherwise have been, but he at last discovered that her affection produced no fruits. She was also fickle and capricious. Sometimes she would be very obliging, and again she would have a dozen excuses to prevent her complying with his requests.

The counters at Tiffany & Young's are beginning to be thronged—the pictures on Barnum's Museum are longer and more dazzling than ever—in Thomson's window is a more splendid display of confectionary—and all "the ruination-shops on the west side of Broadway," as Willis says, have put on their most brilliant air—the holidays have arrived! And with them came Howard Barnes for a flying visit. Isabel was very proud of her gay, handsome brother, and took him with her to every place of amusement. But Howard soon found that when he spoke to her of his own feelings and occupations her thoughts were not with him. He could no longer tell her everything with perfect assurance that she would understand and sympathize with him. Those ten days did more to lessen his confidence in his sister, and weaken her influence over him than he himself was conscious of. When they parted, Howard's embrace was rather cold, and he heard Isabel's renewed promises to write frequently with a strange smile.

But what of Isabel's poetry all this time? It had once been her dearest pleasure to prove her feelings in song, but fashionable life is to poetry as the frost to the tender plant—it withers away its life. Isabel's sacred gift had been long neglected, and now when she essayed to wake her silent lute, she marveled that it did not answer her again. Ah! her feelings were touched with worldly perfumes, and the trembling, shadowy strings shrank from them in dismay. She had formed many projects of writing much when she should be free from school, whither had they fled?

She now found flirtation much more agreeable. Among the many moustached exquisites who sunned themselves in her hazel eyes, or kept up

the ball of quick repartee with Mary, there were none whom gossip had fixed upon as Isabel's favored suitor. Almost the only trait of wiser feeling that there was left in the coquettish belle, betrayed itself in the blushes with which she received the attentions of Mr. Charles Morgan, a young lawyer, who boasted no exquisite affectations, but whose true, noble feelings showed themselves in his polished manners, his refined conversation, and the intelligence that lit up his handsome face. But Isabel smiled on all—flirted in the morning with Mr. Menteith—shopped at Stewarts with Mr. Hyde—walked in Fifth Avenue with Mr. Byron Chase—talked and glanced away the afternoon with Captain Allen, and polkad with Mr. Edgar Merrill in the evening. The most *recherchee* of all devoted himself to Mary Everett—the heiress—and Isabel often teased her about him. Mary curled her red lip, and shook her head; but one evening, near the end of that month when ladies talk least, Lieutenant Boyd entered the parlor, holding "his hat in his hand, that remarkably requisite practice." And before an hour had elapsed, he managed, looking from his patent-leathers to Mary's eyes, to offer his heart and hand to her acceptance. The hand was very elegant, and wore diamonds of the first water—Mary had not the least objection to that—but the heart—Miss Everett's tone was a little haughty as she refused the gallant Lieutenant.

The winter is over at last—the winter to which Isabel had so long looked forward—and what are its fruits? She has time for reflection now, and what sees she as she looks around her? She sees, though he says nothing of it, how disappointed is her father. He had expected his daughter's society—expected her affectionate attentions—had longed to feel her warm breath on his brow—to trace in her eyes the likeness to her dead mother. Has Isabel been to him what an only and indulged daughter should be to such a father? Has she been to him half what she once dreamed she would be? And her brothers—how slight was the influence she held over Edward now. And Howard's letters since his last visit home had breathed an altered spirit. They were constrained and much less affectionate. They alluded too to scenes and companions far different from those of other days, and still darker hints might be gathered from an occasional unguarded sentence. Howard's frank, social disposition made him particularly open to temptation, and Isabel wept as she thought how much the knowledge of her sympathy and constant interest might have done to guard him from such influences.

In May he obtained leave of absence for a short time, and poor Isabel saw with a burning

the change in his manners and feelings toward herself.

"Come, Howard," she said to him, one evening, "go round to Clinton Place and make a call with me on a very pretty young lady."

"Don't ask me, Isabel! I have a perfect horror of city young ladies. They're made for show. Everything is done for other people, and not for their own family—they dress for others—talk for others—live for others."

"Why, Howard, what possesses you! Come! go with me. I know you want to."

"Once for all, Isabel, I do not wish to. I have no desire to make the acquaintance of any more of the belles of New York. One is quite enough," and he left the room.

This was only a trifle, but Isabel heard him break forth at the breakfast-table, the next morning, in a tirade against the fickleness of woman, in which he only seemed to be checked by a sudden recollection of his mother—and she saw him every night depart alone for some scene of dissipation, from which he never returned till after midnight. At breakfast his blood-shot eye and colorless lip would bring fresh remorse to the sister's heart. One morning when she had heard him with heavy step descend the stairs after the family had dispersed, she ran down to pour out his coffee for him, and tried with her most winning ways to dispel the gloom that hung over his countenance, and get him to confide in her as of yore. But in vain. It was the last day, however, that he was to be at home, and she could not let the opportunity pass. Throwing at length her arms around his neck, she poured forth her full heart with mingled sobs and tears. Deeply did she condemn herself, and earnestly entreat his forgiveness. And Howard's affectionate nature fully, freely forgave all. But Isabel felt that evil had been done perhaps beyond her power to repair, when she heard his account of the last few months—heard him acknowledge that he had spent but little time in his studies—that he had connected himself with a set of dissipated young men who shunned not the gaming-table or the wine cup. He promised his sister, however, that all this should cease when he should once more have some one into whose breast to pour his difficulties and griefs, certain of interest and sympathy. And Isabel trusted and hoped, and with a heart filled anew with bright dreams, she sent her brother forth again.

She now turned to her Brother Edward, but she found that she could not break the reserve which enshrouded him. He was always gentle and kind, but into the inner depths of his spirit she might not penetrate. Her father was absent on a journey, and she contented herself with

regard to him, by dreaming of a different life when he came back.

The lofty resolves of Isabel's school days had been revived, and in their train came some of her old romantic visions of the chosen one to whom her fate should be allied. How different was the ideal she had then formed from any of the perfumed *elegantes* whose cards were daily laid upon her mother's table! Such thoughts made her receive with more interest the increasing attentions of Charles Morgan—and, to make the story short, when she left the city for warm weather it was as his affianced bride.

During her stay with her Cousin Mary in Morristown, she wrote frequently to both her brothers. But Howard's replies, though they came regularly, were not what they once were; and Isabel felt, bitterly felt, that the chain of confidence once broken can never more be renewed.

The band in the rooms of the United States at Saratoga was pouring its gay music forth—the belles from every state in the Union were flirting their fans—and the fortune-hunters were making the best use of their eye-glasses. Saratoga, charming Saratoga, was in all its glory; and mingling with the giddy throng were Mary Everett and Isabel Barnes. At the breakfast-table, the morning of their arrival, they met Captain Allen and Mr. Hyde, two of their New York cavaliers.

"How delighted I am, Miss Barnes," cried the captain, "haven't we good luck, Hyde? You look as charming as ever, Miss Bella," continued he, "why, *your* breakfast ought to be happy to be eaten. And, Miss Mary, haven't you a look to spare for your humble servant?"

Every evening during their stay at Saratoga, Isabel—the *fiancée*—accepted the quiet attentions of Mr. Eyde, the heir of a Boston millionaire, and sentimentalized with Captain Allen over her morning tumbler of Congress water. Mary gave herself up to the current of the hour, only now and then allowing herself to long for action.

Action, responsibility—did she long for those? Even in the midst of that thoughtless scene came a fearful summons to them. A letter arrived for her informing her of her father's sudden death. That same night saw her on her way to Morristown. With a face pale as ashes, but a tearless eye, she alighted from the carriage at the door of her home. That peculiar odor belonging to nothing save the casket of death, struck upon her senses as she entered the house, but still she shed no tear, not even when she was clasped to her mother's breaking heart. And not until she looked on the motionless features, upon which rested that strange beauty which death lends to the homeliest face, did her throbbing, burning heart find relief in tears.

Days, weeks passed on, and Mary saw that she must rouse herself from her grief. It was found that by an unfortunate speculation just previous to his death, Mr. Everett's property had become deeply involved, and instead of Mary and her young sisters being heiresses, the whole family were in danger of actual want. Mrs. Everett was utterly overwhelmed with the suddenness of her bereavement, and totally unable to think of anything save that. But Mary saw that with energy and decision something might yet be rescued from the grasp of her father's creditors, and very new and wonderful it was to those sober business men, to see that slender girl of nineteen assume a mien of dignity and firmness, and insist upon attending herself to the settlement of her father's affairs. She shrank from no difficulty or labor in the long and complicated process—bringing to the task a clear head and an accurate knowledge of accounts, together with a quick eye for any attempt at evasion or injustice, and a firm will to resist it. At the end of four months she had the satisfaction to find that by her energy she had secured for her mother a decent competence.

In the meantime she heard frequently from her Cousin Isabel, whose sympathy and affection were most precious to her. Isabel had her own sorrows, though she forbore to trouble Mary with them. Charles Morgan had pressed her to fulfil her engagement with him. He had only an humble home to offer her, but a love deep and fervent to hallow that home. Isabel contrasted it, however, with the splendid mansion of Mr. Hyde, which she knew was at her disposal. Once she would have called herself sordid to allow wealth to influence her in this respect. Not far distant too was the time when, with a heart filled with affection for Charles Morgan's many noble qualities, she had promised to be his. But still reason with herself as she might, she shrank from becoming a poor man's wife. She broke her plighted troth.

She was not happy after the deed was done. Many uneasy thoughts were busy in her breast. Howard too had long ceased to say anything in his letters about his resolution to avoid evil companions. He confided nothing to his sister, and she trembled for him. Her fears were not without foundation. Soon came a letter to Mr. Barnes from the president of the college, warning him of the dangerous course of his son, whose habits had become very inattentive and dissipated. Bitter, bitter and scalding were the tears that Isabel mingled with her father's over this letter. How differently did she now regard her Cousin Mary, whom she had once almost pitied for having no fair dreams to realize. Mary had now left home to fill the situation of governess

in a family at the South, firmly devoting herself to increase the comforts of her mother and sisters. In constant employment she had found the best balm for her bleeding heart, and cheerfulness had already begun to revisit her spirit. A part of her first letter to Isabel ran thus:—"I longed for action, dear Isabel—I have it now, far more sudden and severe than I had looked for. My task is a trying one, as weary heart and aching brow already testify. On the evening of my arrival at Mr. Collins', I was received by Mrs. Collins herself with an air of condescending kindness. Oh, Isabel, God grant that my proud spirit and rebellious temper may be subdued. After a while she told me that she would show me my room whenever I liked, and that she expected a little company in the evening, which she would be very happy to have me join if I desired, adding, 'if the children wish to dance, perhaps you might play for them.' After tea I was seated in the shaded corner of the parlor, when the first guest entered, to whom I was slightly named—Miss Everett. She bowed politely. To the next arrival, a tall, fine-looking woman, I was introduced in the same way. As the lady did not stumble over me, nor drop her chair upon my toes, I presume she was aware of my presence, but she gave no other indication of the fact. However, I soon took my place at the piano. I played some of our old polkas and mazourkas, Isabel. When the children and their companions were tired, which was not until long after my fingers were aching, I swallowed down my tears, and turned around to a room full of twenty people, all perfect strangers. I got up and walked to a table where a pile of engravings was lying. There for two hours I sat, turning over and over those dull pictures. Not a creature spoke to me. There were girls of my own age present, but an impassable barrier seemed suddenly to have arisen between me and them. I asked myself whether I was the same Mary Everett or not. These are only trifles, Isabel—trifles indeed, compared to the rest I have to bear—but yet—I have learned to endure them calmly though—to hear unconcernedly the usual reply to inquiries of who I am, 'oh! it's only the governess'—to repress without anger the too familiar attentions of the young gentlemen visitors at Mrs. Collins'. I devote my time and energies to the task of hearing grammar lessons, mending pens, 'touching up' drawings, teaching stupid children to drum on the piano, and *learning patience*. If sometimes my heart fails me, and I long for rest, I think of my distant mother and sisters, and new courage and resolve comes to the spirit of the lonely orphan."

Isabel Barnes read this letter with sadness, yet how much she would have given for the

consciousness of well-doing that dwelt in Mary's breast. She herself was now reaping the bitter fruits of her own folly. With the dawning of the New Year, Howard Barnes came home to die. His late reckless course had developed the seeds of consumption within him, and in his wasted form and haggard features, Isabel scarcely recognized her once joyous, beautiful brother. The physicians gave no hope—his constitution had been too much injured—and oh! how full of misery, how overflowing with agony was Isabel's heart, as she sat herself to the task of cheering and soothing his decline! Howard's every word was full of kindness and affection toward herself, yet keen were the pangs with which she heard him tell how with a heart lonely, slighted, thrown back upon itself, he had rushed to the gaming-table to drown his thoughts in excitement, and then how ineffectual had been his resolution to desert either that or its accompaniments, especially as he found it impossible to renew his old feelings toward his sister, or to repose his old confidence in her. On her knees, with every fibre of her frame wrung with anguish, did that sister implore his forgiveness, and Howard granted it eagerly, and entreated her to be calm.

But calmness was not for her yet. She had yet to listen to his dying expressions of deep love, each word sending new daggers to her heart—to witness his dying struggle—and to bend at last in speechless woe over his cold remains.

Weary months rolled on, and another drop was to be added to her cup of bitterness. Her Brother Edward, who was now fifteen years of age, declared his wish for a sailor's life. In vain Isabel wept and urged him not to leave her for a course so full of dangers. She felt that she had now no right to expect his compliance with her wishes, and at length mournfully bade him farewell. "But oh!" thought she, "if I had only made his home what it should have been, he would not have wished to leave it."

It was now her portion to lie awake in the

dreary night-watches, when the storm was abroad in the heavens, listening to the roaring of the tempest with an imagination conjuring up scenes of suffering and death on the broad ocean.

Isabel, oh! how sadly did she receive the proposal of the wealthy Mr. Hyde. For him she had broken solemn vows, and wrung a noble heart, and now she absolutely loathed the wealth offered to her acceptance.

The zephyrs of June were calling the roses out when Isabel refused Mr. Hyde, and before the last ones had faded she stood by the new-made grave of her father. "My Uncle Everett," she murmured, "said that ere long I would have a rough awakening from my dreams. If he could see me now he would say that the awakening has been rough indeed."

Three, four years passed on. Mary Everett had become the bride of a talented young physician, and was living near her mother in her native village of Morristown—content with quiet duties—when she received a few lines from Isabel, entreating her to come to her. She immediately obeyed the summons, and most precious to her dying cousin were her presence and love. Un-speakably mournful were the feelings with which Mary gazed upon the exquisite beauty so soon to be hid forever, and felt the wondrous fascination of Isabel's manner, and listened to the revelations of that spirit whose rare endowments had done so little for their possessor. One day Isabel gave into her hands a small manuscript volume containing her own poems. "Keep them, Mary," she said, with a sad smile, "they are the last remains of my dreams."

Paler and paler grew that fair face—clearer and clearer those bright, spiritual eyes. One cool October evening, Mary had risen to arrange the pillows under her cousin's head, when she noticed a quick change pass over her features—a smile of gentlest affection illumined them—and then all was still. The dreamer was at rest.

THE FAIRY REGION OF THE RHINE.

BY HELEN FAWCETT.

THE Lurlei rocks, which are situated a little above the Katz, form a striking contrast to the general scenery of the Rhine. During the greater part of his journey along the river, the traveller beholds a luxuriant country, and the ruins which stand on the mountain heights seem only like so many desolate specks in a region of universal luxuriance; but at the Lurlei, cultivation ceases altogether, and the traveller, instead of seeing countless vineyards, finds himself in the midst of wild, barren rocks. The Rhine is here contracted to half its size, and the masses being so disposed as to intercept the prospect, it seems reduced to a small basin. The echo of these rocks, which is very remarkable, adds to the effect of the scene, and it is the custom of the masters of the Dusseldorf steamboats, when they arrive here, to fire a small cannon, for the purpose of producing it.

Popular tradition supposes that the Lurlei, also called Lorelei, was once the residence of a water-fairy named Lore, and that the appellation of the place is derived from her name, "Lei," being a Rhenish word signifying "rock." This fairy used to appear to the boatmen on the river, standing on the summit of the rock, and clad in garments of a watery hue. Her long, fair hair hung down upon her shoulders, and her aspect was so beautiful, that those who had once seen her could never forget her. To the virtuous inhabitants of the district she acted as a benefactress, scattering good fortune around her; but she was a foe to the wicked, and those who, on passing the rock, ventured to scoff at her power, were swallowed up by the angry waves as a punishment for their temerity. It was deemed sinful presumption to ascend to her favorite spot, and those who erred in this respect, generally fell into some abyss, or were lost in pathless thickets, whence they could with difficulty extricate themselves.

It is said that Hermann, the only son of Bruno, an early Count Palatine, who inhabited a castle in the neighborhood, was seized with an irresistible desire to behold the fairy. Scarcely a day passed in which he did not approach the rock, of which he had heard so many wild stories, and he often expressed the emotions of his heart with the sound of his guitar. Late one evening, when he was watching the rock from a grotto near its foot, he suddenly perceived on its summit a light

of unusual hue and brilliancy, which, gradually condensing, assumed the form of the fairy. With a feeling of rapture he flung down his guitar, and extended his arms to the figure, who seemed to greet him with a friendly smile. He even fancied that he heard her breathe his name in a tone of affection; and so great was his delight, that he fell senseless to the ground, and did not recover till the following morning. From this time a change came over him, and he was a victim of a constant melancholy, which his father observed though he could not divine its cause. As a distraction to his thoughts the Palatine desired him to join the Imperial army, and earn his knightly spurs, and he could not, in honor, refuse this request. However, on the night before his departure, accompanied by a faithful attendant, he visited the spot whence he had beheld the vision. Looking up to the moonlit summit, he sang to the notes of his guitar, and was answered by the sound of the waters, in which something like a human voice was blended. Presently flames began to play about the rock, in the midst of which the fairy appeared, beckoning the youth with her right hand, while she seemed to control the waves with her left. The waters, as if by her command, rose to a fearful height, the boat was dashed to pieces, and the attendant escaped with difficulty, while Hermann sank.

The Palatine, as soon as he heard the news, was beside himself with grief and rage, and swearing to be revenged on the fairy, hastened to the rock with a chosen body of retainers. To his amazement he saw her sitting on a point exactly perpendicular to the water's surface, and eyeing him with a glance which made his heart shrink within him. In answer to his demand for his son, she pointed to the waters, and avowing that she had carried him away; and that he was now dwelling with her in a crystal palace at the bottom of the Rhine. She then flung a stone into the water, upon which a wave arose to the summit of the rock. Gliding down the wave, she vanished into the river, and has never been seen since, though it is said she is often heard to the present day.

A little above the Lurlei rock, and close to the village Oberwesel, which stands on the opposite bank, are seven rocks in the river, called the "Seven Virgins," a name which is explained by popular tradition. In ancient times the castle of Schonberg, now in ruins, was, it is said, inhabited

by a knight who had seven daughters. As, on his decease, these inherited all his wealth, and were, moreover, endowed with great beauty, they were eagerly sought in marriage, but they regarded every suitor with cold disdain; and though they treated all their visitors with kindness and hospitality, an offer of marriage was sure to be answered with scorn and insult. At the same time they caused many of the lovers to foster hopes of ultimate success, and hence these would not withdraw from the sphere of fascination. On one occasion two of the suitors engaged in a jealous quarrel, and as this threatened to have a sanguinary issue, and both were greatly esteemed, a general voice was raised in the neighborhood that the ladies should declare their intentions with regard to their suitors, and not create further mischief by alluring and repelling them. Thus urged, they promised to give their decision on an appointed day.

When the day arrived, the suitors came in

abundance, watching the castle door with anxiety. Presently a female attendant appeared, who told them that the ladies awaited them in a bower of their garden, which bordered the river. They rushed to the spot, but to their amazement saw the seven sisters in a boat at some distance from the bank. The eldest, who stood at the stern, informed them that they loved their liberty too much to submit to the slavery of marriage, and that they were on their way to the Netherlands, where they had an aunt, and where they intended to break the hearts of new admirers. However, while they were scoffing at the unhappy knights, a storm arose, the boat struck against a rock, and they all sank to the bottom of the river. Soon afterward seven rocks were seen peering above the surface of the waters; and as these are supposed to be the "Seven Virgins," in an altered form, they are regarded as a wholesome warning against female coyness.

ALICE VERNON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM," "DORA ATHERTON," &c.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57.

MR. VERNON had banished his favorite daughter. But was he, therefore, happy?

How could he be happy, when everything reminded him of her. If the library door opened, he unconsciously looked up, expecting to see her cheerful smile. If he heard a step near the piano, he turned to ask Alice for a favorite air, before he could remember she was gone.

Though a stern man, he could not endure this. Suddenly it was announced, to the astonishment of all, that his magnificent establishment was to be brought to the hammer, as he intended to travel for several years.

Curiosity was on the alert to discover the reasons. The elopement of his younger daughter gradually became known, but the facts were frequently exaggerated, and the usual story painted the guilt of Alice in the darkest colors. So much was this the case, indeed, that Randolph found his professional prospects seriously injured, for most of the few patrons he had were members of the same circle as the Vernons, and thought that, in casting him off, they were avenging an outraged father.

Poor Alice! how crushed she was, how pale and humbled, under this accumulation of misfortunes. She had now awoke to a sense of her sinfulness. She wondered, indeed, how she could ever have erred, the violation of duty seemed to her so flagrant.

And yet she loved her husband as much as ever, ay! ten thousand times more. She took to herself all the blame of their hasty marriage. Nay, she went further, she secretly lamented that she had embarrassed, if not ruined Randolph. All this made her weep often when alone. But no sooner did her husband enter, than duty united with love to chase the tears from her face; she put on her brightest smiles; and a stranger, to have seen her then, would have thought that never was bride so happy.

They lived in small lodgings, in a second rate street, one room being occupied as Randolph's studio, while in the other they lived. A half grown Irish girl was cook, maid and servant of all work. Economy characterized every department of their little establishment, for except the

jewels which had been sent after Alice, and the remains of the last picture Randolph had sold, they had no resources.

Yet, poor as they were, poor at least compared to what Alice had once been, the natural taste of the young wife was seen in the many little beautiful articles, scattered about their solitary apartment. The costliest of these were wrecks of her former life, elegant work-boxes, cologne-bottles, ink-stands, or other pretty feminine trifles: but the chief charm of the room consisted in the number and variety of plants, most of which Alice had purchased in pots, in the market, and which kept the chamber filled with fragrance. There were tea-roses, daily-roses, verbena, heliotrope, mignonette, geraniums, an Egyptian lily, the towering yellow jessamine, and the bell-shaped, orange-colored arbuttulum, all of which it was her daily task to water and tend.

Alice had made several attempts to see her father, but her letters, soliciting an interview, were invariably returned unopened. Randolph, whose high spirit had ill-brooked her perseverance under such indignities, at last interferred and positively forbade her to make any more efforts.

"Only once more, George," she said, pleadingly, the tears in her sweet eyes. "I have done very wrong, and pa has reason to be angry. But he may yet relent, you know. I can but try. It is my duty to try, is it not?"

"I don't feel sure of that, dearest," he said, putting his arm around her waist, drawing her to him, and kissing her. "It seems to me that your father's anger is disproportioned to the offence. I have never looked on your disobedience, moreover, as the crime you morbidly think it——"

But the wife, half playfully, yet half sadly still, putting her tiny hand on his mouth, stopped his words.

"Oh! George," she said: and gave him such a look.

"Well, well, dearest; I won't quarrel with you. But it chafes me, you don't know how it chafes me, to see you treated with such silent scorn."

"Ah! George, didn't I treat pa worse? I never said a word to him, you know, but went off and married you, as if I did not care whether he liked it or not."

"But if he had been told, he would have opposed us, and then you would have been driven into open disobedience. We talked all this over, at the time. At first I wished, as you remember, to go to Mr. Vernon——"

"You did, you did. But somehow," and she looked up with a bewildered air, "I thought the way we took would be the best, though how I could have fallen into such a delusion I cannot tell. It seems to me now that I did the very worst thing I could."

Strange that, even yet, she had never suspected Isabel. Perhaps her husband had, but if so he kept his own counsel: he did not wish to grieve Alice, who still, infatuated girl, loved and esteemed her sister. And it was rather Isabel's studied avoidance of them that made Randolph suspect what he did, than any positive facts which had come to his knowledge, for Isabel never visited them, and though, if she passed them on the street, as had once or twice been the case, she bowed, it was with a distance and coldness that precluded speaking. Simple, trusting Alice attributed this to the commands of her father, and felt certain that, in the end, Isabel would gain their pardon: but Randolph began at last to suspect the secret hostility of the elder sister, though as yet even he could not divine the cause.

"Well, its no use regretting what is past," resumed Randolph. "In truth, Elsie," he had pet names too for his darling, "you sometimes make me almost angry. One would think you did not love me."

She started up from his bosom, on which she had been leaning, her eyes dilating with astonishment.

"To be sure," he said, half laughing at her look. "Don't you always talk as if you regretted marrying me——"

"Oh! George, how can you?"

Her eyes filled with tears; the words choked in her throat.

He was cut to the heart. Taking her head between his hands, he stooped and kissed her tears away.

"Don't take my hasty words, little one, in earnest. I didn't mean that you don't love me." She began to smile again, though faintly and sadly. "But I really cannot see that you committed such a crime in marrying me. No parent has a right, I think, to separate two hearts that love, unless there are better reasons for a refusal than existed in our case."

"I know, I know. But still, dear George, it

is dreadful to feel that a parent, and an only parent too, is angry with you, especially when your own conscience tells you that you did wrong. You know we might still have loved each other, even if we had not married."

Randolph bent down, kissed her, and whispered,

"Yes! but not as now."

The beautiful cheek was dyed in blushes; the large eyes looked timidly at his for a moment; and then the face was buried in his bosom, while the small hand closed tightly on his own.

"Forgive me, George," she murmured, after a moment. "Don't think I prize your love too little. Oh!" and again the face was lifted radiantly to his own, "how often I reproach myself that, by marrying you when I did, I deprived you of so many comforts, by compelling you to share your narrow income with one so extravagant as I am."

"Hush, pet bird, not a syllable of that. I feel prouder this hour," and he looked proud enough to be sure, as he glanced around, "to hold my little wife in my arms, and to know that she is here to soothe my cares with her sweet smiles, than if I owned a kingdom without her."

"Ah, flatterer!" And she tried to free herself, blushing and smiling, and playfully continuing, "but some of these days, when pa relents, for indeed I can't believe he will always be angry with me, I'll pay you, oh, with what elegant things! for all these nice compliments. You shall have such a superb dressing-gown, instead of this poor, faded old thing; and such exquisite Turkish slippers, pa has just the pattern; and a studio fit for Raphael; and the handsomest horse that can be bought: for you are a dear, nice old fellow, after all," and she threw her arms around his neck suddenly, like a spoiled child, and kissed him, "and have really earned a whole ship load of gifts for being so forbearing to poor little me."

A blessed thing is wedded love. Blessed even in poverty and sorrow. Blessed in its little, innocent blandishments, as in its deeper sympathies and consolations. God knows this would be but a poor, miserable world without it.

Meanwhile Mr. Vernon was hurrying from one capital in Europe to another, in hopes, by constant change of scene, to forget Alice. For he loved that daughter, notwithstanding his severity toward her, with a feeling that mingled the fervor of youth with the memories of age. To him she was not only the favorite child, but a continual reminiscence of his lost wife, for he could never think of the face of the one without recalling that of the other. His very cruelty toward her had been increased by the depth of these feelings. Natures like his, are angry at disobedience in

proportion to the extent of the affection they have entertained.

He found he could not live without her. Yet his will struggled continually against his tenderness, so that the more he suffered, the more resolute he strove to be. But his physical system gradually gave way in this conflict. After an absence of two years, he suddenly told Isabel that he should return to America, and in less than a week they were actually on the broad Atlantic.

When he reached his native city, his old friends scarcely recognized him. The once vigorous frame was bowed, the cheek sunken, the eye dim: he was but the wreck of his former self.

He returned, as he well knew, to die. "A young oak may recover from a lightning stroke," he said, "but not an old and worn-out trunk." But oh, how he yearned, before he died, to see his Alice once more. And had she, at that time, fallen at his feet, implored his pardon, and presented her little daughter, the very image of herself, he would have forgiven all. But he was too proud to send for her, much as he suffered. Oh! that pride.

Isabel, who could not but see the workings of his mind, was resolved that whatever else might happen, his sister should never have an interview with their father. Mr. Vernon, before he left for Europe, had executed a will, in which Isabel was made his sole heir. Her revenge would be foiled if this will should be revoked, and that it would be cancelled, if her sister gained their father's presence, she felt certain.

Fearing that Alice might seek an interview, she left the most strict injunctions with the servants, that no one should be admitted to his presence without she was at home. In all his rides abroad she accompanied him also. But accident had nearly frustrated her precautions, and that by means entirely unexpected.

The married life of Randolph and Alice had been blessed with one child, a daughter, who was one of those rare and angelic beings that sometimes are seen on earth. Lily Randolph was less of mortal mould than a visitant from another sphere. From her earliest infancy, she had been as sweet-tempered as she was lovely, and with her delicate complexion, sunny hair, and winning smile she was the loveliest of children. She never went into the street that strangers did not stop her to caress and kiss her. There seemed to linger, on the memory of this angel-child, visions of the celestial world. Everything that was beautiful, from a violet to a star, she adored with a fervor and earnestness that was wonderful in one so young. The first thing she had noticed particularly had been a flower in her mother's chamber, and from that hour up she

had passionately admired those fair and fragile things. Her little heart was all affection. Even those persons who were generally indifferent to children—and, strange to say, there are such—were won by her beautiful smile, by her loving eyes, by the very way in which she stood silently at their knees. To those who were dear to her, her thousand innocent modes of caressing, all so graceful, yet so varied, rendered her, day by day, more and more their idol. To her parents she had become as necessary as life itself. She had grown, indeed, a part of themselves. This was especially the case with respect to the mother, who was her almost constant companion. Between these two a strange bond had sprung up, for in many things this child was above her years. When Randolph was busy in his studio, they were sole and nearly constant companions. Rarely was Lily taken for a walk unless by her mother. Living thus ever together, with no other interests to distract their attention, their affection had the depth of that between adults, but oh! with how much more purity and heavenliness. Lily seemed always instinctively to divine her mother's mood, prattling and smiling when it was joyful, and nestling to her condolingly when it was sad.

One day the faithful Irish nurse, who had served Alice during the first year of Lily's life, and who often came to see her darling, and obtain the honor of taking her out for a walk, had the little girl in one of the public squares. The child, who had been confined to the house, unavoidably, for some days, was in a state of the highest excitement. The beautiful, sparkling fountain, the waving trees, the butterflies, but most of all the flowers scattered about, rendered her almost wild with delight. Her bright eyes, heightened color, and golden curls waving as she ran to and fro, attracted every one's attention. They particularly riveted the gaze of an invalid old man, who had tottered into the square, attended by a man-servant, and now sat on one of the benches. For a long time he watched the child's motions, quick and graceful as those of a bird; and, at last, when she came near, he called her to him.

The little girl stopped pantingly and looked to see who spoke. The sad countenance and decrepid figure of the old man touched her heart. Leaving the beautiful butterfly, which she had been chasing, she came and stood by the invalid's knee, looking up sympathizingly into his face.

"What is your name, my dear?" said the old man, in a kindly voice, taking her hand.

"Lily," she said, frankly, tossing back the bright curls from her sunny face.

"Do you like playing here?"

"Oh! yes, for everything is so beautiful," she

answered, enthusiastically. "There are such pretty flowers, and, in the morning, such dear little birds: you don't know how sweetly they sing; you should come and hear them." And she smiled up in his face, as if she had known him for years.

The old man's heart yearned strangely to that child. In other years he had been blessed with a daughter of whom this little girl continually reminded him. It seemed to him, indeed, as if his darling looked at him again from those very eyes. There was emotion in his voice, therefore, as he continued,

"And do you like the fountain?"

"Oh! yes," was the rapturous answer, "so much. And isn't it pretty this afternoon? Sometimes it goes, straight up, you know, to the sky, and falls plump down. But I like it better when, as to-day, it curls over at top, just like a flower."

"You are a little poet, my dear," said Mr. Vernon, for our readers have divined that it was he. "Did your ma never tell you so?"

She scarcely understood what he meant. So she looked inquiringly at him, and then replied, in her sweet, innocent way,

"Mamma tells me to be a good girl, and pray to God; and I do, every night too; for papa, and mamma, and nurse, and grandfather, and aunt——"

"Grandfather!" interrupted Mr. Vernon, a strange suspicion flashing across him: and he drew the child yet closer, and gazed eagerly into her face. "Have you a grandfather?"

"Yes, but I never saw him, though mamma says I will some day. He is gone away, oh! ever so far."

"Then you expect to see him when he returns?"

"Mamma says she hopes so. But she cries when she says it. Do grandfathers always make mammas cry?"

As she spoke, she looked up into Mr. Vernon's face, with an earnest, inquiring, serious gaze, as if her little heart was troubled deeply with this mystery. The old man could bear it no longer. The tears rushed to his dim eyes, and he said, falteringly,

"What is your father's name, my dear?"

The blue eyes of the child distended with surprise, and then immediately a sad, sympathizing expression stole to her face. She drew nearer to the invalid as she answered in a low and less eager voice,

"Pa's name is Mr. Randolph. You should know papa, he paints such beautiful pictures."

But the strain on Mr. Vernon's feelings was too great: he did not hear Lily conclude her sentence; for, at the mention of her father, and

the confirmation of his suspicions, he groaned, and fell back as if lifeless.

All was now confusion. The child, terrified and concerned, burst into tears and even shrieks; while the footman, who had stood at a respectful distance, rushed up to his master's assistance. Lily was overthrown, and would have been trampled under in the press, if her nurse had not flown to her assistance, and carried her off, plentifully abusing the footman for having, as she said, "been nearly the death of her darlint, the impudent baste of a man."

Mr. Vernon was taken home, and continued, for some time, insensible. His first question, when he finally came to, was after his grandchild. Isabel thought, at first, he was raving, but when she was told that he had really been conversing with a little girl in the park, at the time he was seized, she divined the truth. But she would not admit it to others. She told the servant sharply that Mr. Vernon had no grandchild, and that only delirium, or dotage could explain his asking for one.

From that day the invalid never rose from his bed. Isabel was now constantly with him, almost entirely excluding assistance: her concern, she said, would not allow her to leave him.

Alice, meantime, had heard from both the nurse and Lily, of the latter's adventure; but little did she suspect who the invalid was. By accident, however, she learned her father's sinking condition, and obtained her husband's consent to make a last effort to see him. "If he should die," she said, "and I unforgiven, I could never again be happy."

Accordingly, with a palpitating heart, almost a week after the meeting of Lily and Mr. Vernon, the discarded daughter rung the bell at her father's magnificent portal.

A strange servant came to the door, which he held only half open, standing carefully in the aperture.

"Can I see Mr. Vernon?" said Alice.

Her voice was tremulous as she spoke, and she was so faint that she clung to the door-frame.

The servant eyed her with astonishment. Ignorant alike of her person, and of the family history, he could not account for this agitation.

"Mr. Vernon is sick and can see no one," he said, and without moving from his position.

But Alice, roused to mortal terror at these words, which implied that her father was dying, found all her strength returning, and with a boldness that, at any other time, she would have been incapable of, she pushed by the footman, entered the hall, and laid her hand on the parlor door.

"Is he dying? Does he keep his bed?" she asked, hurriedly, as the servant, bowing and deprecating, followed her.

The man would have repeated in words, what his manner had already said, but there was something in Alice that awed and prevented him. He felt that he would rather receive the rebuke of his mistress, for disobedience, than tell this poor, agitated creature that his orders were, on no account, to admit anybody.

"Is he dying? tell me—oh! don't keep me in suspense," cried Alice, stopping, with her hand on the door, as she saw the servant's irresolution, which she mistakenly attributed to another cause.

"He is not considered in immediate danger, ma'am," replied the man, opening the door for her. "But Miss Vernon's orders are that nobody should see him. The doctors say he must be kept quiet. Will you take a seat?" And he offered her a chair.

Alice sank gratefully to the seat, for a reaction had come, and she was again trembling all over. For some moments her mind was in a whirl of confused ideas, her only clear perception being that what she had heard of her father's illness fell short of the truth.

Meantime the footman gazed at her in respectful silence, for there is something in real emotion to touch even the rudest heart. At last Alice looked up, and said,

"Can I see Isabel?"

The servant stared. Long as he had been in that house, he had never heard his mistress called anything but Miss Vernon. Who could this stranger be, he asked himself, who spoke familiarly of the haughty heiress?

Alice, even in her great grief and suspense, noticed his astonishment, and hastened to correct herself.

"I mean Miss Vernon," she said.

The servant bowed, and answered, "your card, ma'am, if you please."

But Alice answered, "never mind, tell her it is a friend, an old schoolmate."

Still, however, the footman hesitated, bowing, and looking the request he could not repeat.

"Say it is on urgent business," added Alice, eagerly, noticing this. "I know she will come if you tell her that."

The servant departed, though with reluctant steps, and Alice was left alone to prepare for the interview with her sister. Her sister, whom she had not seen for so long, and whom an instinctive feeling, now experienced for the first time, warned her was not, perhaps, her friend.

More than a quarter of an hour elapsed before Isabel made her appearance. Had the room been the one in which she had formerly spent so many happy hours; had it been furnished with the old, familiar articles, Alice would have given way, under the tide of recollections thus forced

on her: but the house was a new one, and the furniture was new also, so that she managed to preserve, in a great degree, the fortitude so necessary to her.

At last the door opened and Isabel entered.

She had grown thinner and haughtier since Alice had last seen her. The lines of her face were sharp, the eyes sunken, the brow contracted into a slight frown. Peevishness and hauteur were the prevailing expressions of the countenance. Had Alice met her in the street, she would scarcely have recognized her.

But, at first, Alice did not notice these changes. She knew, almost before she looked, that it was Isabel entering. With the first motion of the door she had sprung to her feet, all the old sisterly love gushing in her bosom, and rapidly advanced, with extended arms.

But Isabel, cold, repellant, disdainful, drew back rigidly. For an instant, indeed, she had started; but it was only for an instant; and immediately she was as immovable as marble. Poor Alice, checked in mid career, turned scarlet, her extended arms sinking to her sides; while the elder sister, without uttering a word, continued, for some time, to regard her with haughty scorn and anger. At last Isabel spoke.

"To what, Mrs. Randolph, are we indebted for this visit?"

But Alice could not answer. It was impossible for her, all at once, to realize that this was Isabel, the playmate of her childhood, her only and darling sister. With her large, soft eyes dilated with wonder; her lips parted; and every vestige of color gone from her cheeks, she stood, for a full minute, gazing at Isabel.

A civil sneer crept to the lips of the latter, as she saw this, and with cold hauteur she repeated.

"To what are we indebted, Mrs. Randolph, for this visit?"

And now, at last, Alice spoke. Heaving a deep sigh, she looked reproachfully at her sister, and said, "oh! Isabel."

The tone and glance would have melted any heart but one steeled against all pity. They produced no impression on Isabel, however, for she saw in Alice, not the sister, but only the hated bride of Randolph. The sneer deepened on her thin lips as she answered,

"My time is precious, madam, and you will oblige me by stating your business."

The color rushed back to the cheek of Alice at these cruel words, and indignation, such indignation as her gentle heart could feel, gave her strength to say. "I have come to see my father. I hear he is dangerously ill——"

She would have said more, but the elder sister interrupted her.

"To see your father," she answered. "Do

you wish to insult him? After having, by your disobedience, brought him to what will prove, perhaps, a bed of death, can you so wantonly outrage his feelings as to seek to force yourself upon him?"

Alice gazed at her sister in fresh amazement at these words. Was this the confidant, who had persuaded her to disobedience, and who now, not only disavowed all participation in that crime, but actually reproached her? Indignation, however, came again to her aid.

"Force myself upon him, after bringing him to a bed of death, oh! Isabel, how dare you, how can you use such language? Was it I only that was guilty? Did you not almost advise all that I did? Did you not promise to reconcile papa to me? And now to talk so! Isabel, sister Isabel," she cried, all other feelings subsiding into the agony of unutterable grief, "oh! don't look and talk so cruelly, but get pa to receive me, or my heart," and she placed her hands passionately on it, "my poor heart will break."

And did not even this move Isabel? Perhaps it did. Perhaps she had already been moved to her innermost soul, notwithstanding that cold, haughty, contemptuous look. But if so, pride and revenge had triumphed over all softer emotions. None are utterly wicked, and Isabel was far from being so. In charity to her we must suppose that even her harshness had been exaggerated, from a fear that, if she was less cruel, the part she had resolved to play could not be kept up. She had doubtless dreaded the effect of Alice's voice and look on her heart, and hoped, by a distant and haughty air, at once to repel the suppliant; and now, as she found herself deceived, as she saw Alice grow more earnest, she steelled herself with new barbarities.

"This interview is equally unwise and painful," she said, in a cold voice, yet one that was husky notwithstanding her efforts to make it seem natural. "I will not reproach you, madam, as you have reproached me, though, if you consult your memory, you will recollect that I gave no advice, and assumed no responsibility. And when I see what your disobedience has brought your father to, you must excuse me if I say that, in everything, I coincide with papa——"

"Oh! Isabel, oh! Isabel——"

"Pray don't interrupt me, madam," sharply continued the speaker. "I coincide, I say, entirely with pa. His health, already shattered by your misconduct, must not be endangered by an interview, which could be only painful to him, and which, I should think, none but base motives on your part could have suggested."

Infamous taunt! And from a sister too! What lost spirit, burning with hate and revenge, could have formed such bitter words for those lips?

Alice made no answer. This last insinuation deprived her even of the strength which indignation had given her. She burst into tears. Covering her face with her hands, she sobbed aloud, shaking convulsively as if body and spirit were parting.

Minute after minute passed, yet still that passion of overstrained emotions continued. At last, however, she grew composed. The thought of her father, dying overhead, and dying without forgiving her, gradually banished all other feelings, and she looked up, intending to make a final effort to move Isabel.

But Isabel was gone. Taking advantage of Alice's convulsive grief, the elder sister had stolen noiselessly from the room.

A new flood of tears rushed to the eyes of Alice as she saw this. She felt that the decree was irrevocable, which separated her from her father; and her gentle nature sank under it. But, after a while, the realities of her situation began to impress themselves on her. What if one of the servants should appear, and see her weeping? Or what if Isabel should despatch a footman to thrust her from the house, for any thing was possible from Isabel after the cruel words of the late interview?

She rose, therefore, from the chair where she had sunk, gathered her shawl about her, and left the parlor. In the hall she encountered the servant who had admitted her, and who had apparently been waiting, under instructions, until she should appear. He stepped briskly to the door, opened it, and stood bowing low, as if for her to pass. And thus Alice went forth, for the second and last time, expelled from her father's house.

Alice never recollected how she got home on that day. From the moment she left her father's portal, till she entered her own, all was a chaos.

But when the door of her boarding-house was opened at her well-known ring, there came bounding toward her a vision of beauty that would have shed sunshine into a heart even more desolate than hers. It was her little daughter!

Lily saw, immediately, that her mother was grieved at something, so the boisterous gladness of her welcome ceased, and taking the offered hand in her own tiny one, she looked up silently into that dear face, and went quietly, almost demurely on to their room.

But as soon as the door was opened, the exuberant gaiety of her pure young heart returned again, for she recollected, all at once, what she had intended to tell her mother the first thing, but which she had forgotten in the tumult of the welcome.

"Oh! mamma," she cried, eagerly, dragging her parent across the chamber, "do come and see. Such a beautiful moss-rose bud as I have

found, and you were looking on the bush for one in vain only yesterday, you know. Isn't it pretty?"

It was indeed exquisite, as delicate, pure and fresh as thyself, loveliest of daughters! And the mother said so mentally, as first gazing at the bud a moment, she stooped and kissed her darling.

The little girl followed her parent, talking pleasantly to her, as the latter crossed the room to put away her bonnet and shawl. She told how she had spent the early part of the morning dressing her doll and putting it to sleep; and all this she did so earnestly that one would have thought it the most serious of affairs. Then she told how, after this, she had thought it time to listen for her mamma's ring, and how, when it came, she knew it at once. But her voice, though cheerful, was not gay. She seemed to feel that gaiety would be out of place. Her mother, as much from the consciousness of this, as from the memory of the late interview, began silently to cry; but aware of the weakness of this, tried first to check her tears, and, failing, to hide them from her child.

But the latter soon detected them. Drawing her mother gently to a seat, and looking affectionately up, she said,

"Don't cry, mamma."

Don't cry! Oh! if ever you have, in your deep trouble, heard those touching words from the lips of a little daughter, her eyes bent on yours full of sympathy, and her lips quivering with sorrow because of your sorrow, then you know how it was that Alice suddenly clasped her child to her bosom, kissed her passionately again and again, and wept almost aloud. But if you have never had such a daughter, no words of mine can describe the scene.

At last Alice buried her face on her little one's shoulders. The child waited a while, and then quietly began, with her tiny hands, to turn her mother's head, saying, tenderly, "you ain't crying any more, are you, mamma? Don't cry, dear mamma."

And then there were fresh tears and renewed caresses, till gradually smiles returned to both faces. When Randolph came in to dinner, he found mother and daughter sitting lovingly together, the last nursing her doll quietly on her knee, and eagerly listening, with her little countenance full of concern, to her parent reading the ballad of the "Children in the Wood."

Let us turn from this innocent scene to one which was enacting, at that very hour, in the mansion of Mr. Vernon.

We are in the chamber of death. The carpet is the finest Axminster; the bed is gorgeous with hangings: but these cannot keep out death.

"Isabel," said a feeble voice, "are you there?" "Yes, papa," and she came forward to the bedside.

"Raise me up."

She placed one arm under the pillow of the feeble old man, and, with her disengaged hand, put a second pillow beneath him, so that he could recline in a half sitting posture.

"I think I could sleep a little now, if you were to fan me. The air is very close. Lying down benumbs me."

A shade of concern passed over Isabel's face, for she knew the dread meaning of these signs; and though long expecting her father's death, it was a shock, come when it might.

Her first impulse was to call the servants. But her parent dropping almost immediately into a calm sleep, her present fears were relieved.

For some time the invalid slumbered quietly. But gradually he grew restless, murmuring low words which Isabel could not make out. Finally, his excitement increased, and he spoke louder.

"Alice," he said, "Alice, where are you? You prayed for me, did you, and I never prayed for you." He was evidently mingling his interview with Lily, with recollections of the childhood of Alice. "How much you look like your mother. And she, too, loved flowers. Ah! don't frown on me, angel, up in the clouds of heaven. Don't, don't leave me." The perspiration started from the brow of the sleeper. In a moment he cried, agonizingly, "she has passed into the gate of glory, and the avenging angel, with his flaming sword, warns me back."

A pang shot across the sharp features of Isabel, as if a poisoned arrow had been driven into her heart. She hesitated an instant, and then shook the sleeper.

"Father, father," she cried.

With a groan the old man opened his eyes, and met her wild look, though with vague and wandering gaze.

"Off, off," he gasped, "I do not know you. You are the fiend, I see your shape——"

"Father, father," almost shrieked Isabel, shaking him more violently.

This time he was more fully roused. He drew a deep breath and half moved a hand to his brow.

"Ah! I remember. You are one of my daughters. It is Alice, isn't it?"

The lips of Isabel were compressed till the blood almost started from them, and her face became, for an instant, perfectly livid. But the emotion, by whatever caused, soon passed off.

"It is I, Isabel: surely you know me."

"Oh!—ah!—yes——" He spoke slowly and vaguely, pausing between each word, and looking half doubtfully at her. "It is Isabel's voice. But you have made the room very dark. Why

don't they bring candles? And where is Alice? Ah! now I recollect, Alice isn't here—she is gone, gone, gone."

He spoke the last words despairingly, with a listless, dejected air; and, for a while, was silent. Isabel was torn by conflicting emotions. Thirst for revenge, and hatred to Alice warred within her against the remains of holier feelings; and alas! alas! they triumphed.

Very soon the invalid, who had closed his eyes languidly, opened them with a quick start. Grasping Isabel's arm, and speaking in a rapid voice, he said,

"Ring for a servant. Send for Alice and her child. I am dying and have not forgiven them: oh! what a sinner of sinners I have been. And send also for the lawyer to alter my will. I know now the meaning of the flaming sword, and the sad face of my angel-wife: how can I expect to be forgiven, if I forgive not."

But Isabel never moved. Her face grew almost black, with the conflict within, as when storms

darken a mountain: but she neither answered, nor obeyed.

The old man gazed at her, at first in astonishment, and finally in horror. A terrible suspicion seized him, though not the true one. Desperately he clutched her arm, tighter than ever, and made a violent effort to draw her face down close to his.

"Oh! God," he cried, in a voice thick with terror, "she does not hear me, she does not understand my words. The dying, they say, often, try to speak, and cannot. Isabel, Isabel," he shouted, "can't you hear me? Stoop down lower!"

She obeyed him, but shook her head, as if his words were inarticulate.

"I am dying, it is too late," he cried, dropping her hand, "all is in vain. Oh! my God."

No words can describe the despairing accent of this appeal. Gradually his voice sank into indistinct mutterings: there was a convulsive shudder; and then a corpse lay stark and livid on the bed before Isabel. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

NIAGARA AND THE LAKES.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE loveliest daughter of the West is Cleveland. She sits by the lake shore, robed in white, and garlanded with green, the destined bride of imperial traffic, watching impatiently for the coming of her lord. Beautiful as she is, her virgin charms have not yet rounded to their full luxuriance, nor her child-like guilelessness entirely departed, for she still slumbers at sultry noon under the cool shadows of her native forests, or at evening, beneath the silver moon, laves her feet in the waters of Erie.

I came to Cleveland in the cars. The day had been chilly, with a brisk north wind, which, as the hours wore, deepened to a gale. Late in the afternoon, as I looked wearily from the window, I saw across the sandy hillocks what at first appeared a long, low mountain range. Suddenly my companion cried, "the lake, the lake!" It was, indeed, Lake Erie, as a second, and more careful look convinced me; Erie, with its dark blue waters stretching away till lost in the horizon, like a vision of shadow-land. And now the train whirling around a corner, we found ourselves running along the very edge of the waters, which lashed by the gale, came tumbling in with the roar and foam of the Atlantic. The huge breakers, hurling themselves against the barrier of piles erected to protect the bank, often threw the spray clear over the cars, while the very ground shook beneath their solid tramp, as under the tread of charging squadrons.

An hour afterward, I walked down to the beach, to see the sun set amid this wild commotion. Sheltering myself under the edge of the bank, I watched the gale upon the lake. Often the waves would fly, high above the break-water, like a milk-white water-spout, the spray leaping into the air, crackling and flashing, far over all. The level rays of the setting sun, striking through the cloud of mist that rose and fell above the surf, gave it the appearance of a

fountain of gold-dust, now shooting to the sky in millions of shining drops, and now sinking, like a dream, away. As the glittering illusion disappeared, it revealed the dark billows heaving slowly against the north-western sky, with here and there a schooner heading to the harbor, wing and wing, like some colossal sea-bird seeking its nest. Gradually the sun declined to the level of the horizon; the lake glowed far and near; and then, in an instant, out of sight rushed the brazen, burning orb. I waited in silence till grey twilight, like a mist from the land of Death, breathed its coldness and gloom over the prospect: and then turned to retrace my steps. But as I slowly ascended the bank, I often looked back, when the roar of some breaker, mightier than its fellows, gave warning of the coming death-agony; and at such moments the spectral surf, vaguely seen through the shades of night, seemed like sheeted ghosts flitting and wailing along the shore.

You go to Ontario by way of Niagara. Here, where Nature has erected her solemn sanctuary, Fashion has dedicated a rival shrine; and the roar of the Falls, that once appalled the traveler, is now drowned in the music of the dance. People look at each other there, but not at Niagara. There the beauty displays her marketable charms; the fortune-hunter exhibits his moustache; the matron, strutting and clucking, parades her brood of daughters; and the gourmand, groaning over the scanty fare and cold dishes of the Cataract House, sighs for Delmonico's, and meditates an immigration to the Clifton. And to the Clifton you will go, after a day's experience on the American side, if you love choice food and rare wines, would behold Niagara in all its majesty, or deprecate crossing continually the wettest and costliest of ferries. The dark-eyed Indian girls that sell bead-work on the bridge across the Rapids; the wild waters

that rush by, plunging and whirling toward the awful precipice; the sylvan beauties of Goat Island; and the picturesque American falls, like a cataract of snowy stalactites, will not win a second look, if you have once stood on Table Rock, when the wind is driving the spray from the face of the tumbling waters, so that you c-look right into the centre of the Horse-Shoe. Catch your breath, and cling to the rock for support, for it is no longer a cataract you see, but five great oceans plunging together into the yawning earth, which opens to receive them. Behold them, green and glassy, gliding over the precipice, silent as Fate, measureless as Eternity! Endlessly descending, forever sinking out of sight, it is the Atlantic, bound, Ixion-like, upon a wheel, revolving, and revolving, and revolving. Below, no bottom through the seething mist. Above, everlastingly the polished waters rounding over against the sky. Sublime Niagara!

They have many ways to juggle money out of your pockets at the Falls. You stop to buy an ice-cream, and are asked to walk into a neighboring room, where some curious Indian relics may be seen; and entering unsuspecting at the invitation, incontinently you are mulcted of a quarter of a dollar. You are solicited, every time you visit Table Rock, to pass under the Falls, till at last, wearied out, you give your assent, and being forthwith dressed in villainous red-flannel, with oil-skin over-alls, and wet, clumsy shoes that blister your feet, you are led clattering down a broken staircase, and along the face of the precipice below, till you attain the edge of the fall, where you are told it is as far as you can go, though you have seen nothing as yet for blinding rain and slippery rocks: and for this you are generously charged a dollar. You hire a carriage to drive you to the whirlpool, pay your entrance fee, pant down and up another shocking pair of stairs, and see only a little sullen back-water, and are bored by a one-armed man with a telescope who follows you to extort a fee. You are taken to a sulphur spring, which an imp of a lad sets on fire, and for all this you pay a York shilling, and write yourself down a dunce. Beware of the thousand juggles, and the ten thousand jugglers of Niagara; they will eat you up, if you let them, as the lean kine of Pharaoh devoured the fat. If you visit Niagara, go only to Table Rock. A ten minutes look from that point suffices for most persons,

but you can sit there for hours, ay! for days, till earth and heaven appear to revolve together with that forever rolling wheel. Majestic Table Rock! Below, no bottom but a seething mist. Above, everlastingly the polished waters rounding over against the sky.

Ontario is the youngest daughter of the lakes, and the most beautiful of the bright sisterhood. Deep and clear her waters flow, and unruffled as a mirror. The snowy sails of two nations hover ever over her, like white doves of peace; and she stretches out her virgin arms to receive them, that they may nestle together on her bosom. The ardent sun woos her in vain. But to the chaste moon, which smiles sisterly upon her, she returns a modest greeting. She moves slow and graceful, as a swan gliding down still waters: and her brow is bound by a fillet of blue, gemmed with silver stars.

I saw the sun set from Ontario. The sky had seemed cloudless all the afternoon, but as the great luminary wheeled low toward the West, a bank of vapor began to loom up from the water, and extend, right and left, around the horizon. Already inflamed with rage, for no answering look had returned his ardent gaze all day, he reddened at the sight, and rushed to drive this insolent intruder from his pathway, blazing luridly as he went. As eagerly advanced the jealous darkness to meet him. Soon the rivals met in mid career. The conflict was not long. With a sable pall thrown over him, the hapless sun was hurried out of sight. For a moment his indignant face was seen again, looking through the black bars of his prison-house, for a last glance at his loved Ontario; but remorseless Night, coming to the aid of its satellite, the two bore him downward, struggling, to the black abodes of Dis. Yet, long after he had disappeared, his golden and purple robes, torn from him in the contest, floated cloud-like above the western horizon.

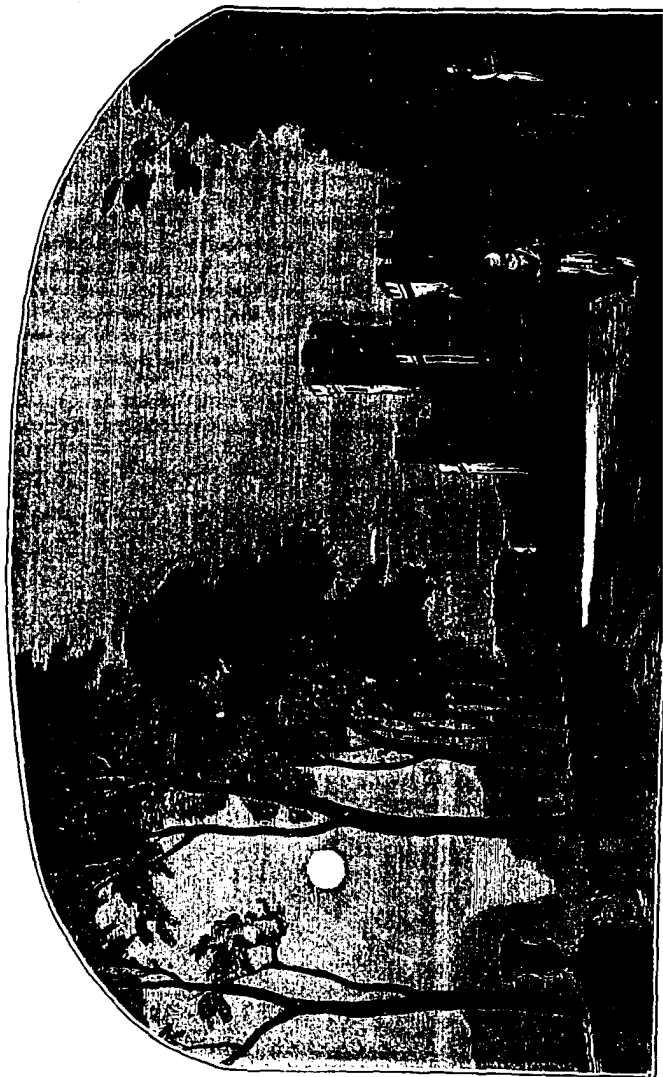
On, on, in the deep silence, and beneath the dim stars, our steamer kept her way. The shores faded out of sight. Nothing was left above but the fathomless sky, or around but the vague, unbounded expanse of water. Darkness followed behind, closing greedily after us; and parted reluctantly before as we advanced. And thus, like a pale ghost traversing the space between the two Eternities, our boat moved on through that still and moonless night.

THE MOONLIGHT RAMBLE.

BY MRS. MARY V. SPENCER.

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THE MOONLIGHT RAMBLE

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THE moon shone full and beautiful on terrace and tower, as two figures, coming from the gardens of Alleyne Castle, emerged into her midnight radiance. One was a manly, handsome form, attired in the guise of a cavalier. His companion was a maiden, apparently in the first blush of womanhood, whose costly garments, as well as the taste with which they were worn, bespoke her of noble blood and refined culture. It was evident, from the first glance, that the two were lovers. A conversation, begun in the garden walk, was being continued.

"Dear Roland," said the lady, looking up tenderly into his face, "ask me not, I beseech you, to meet you in this stolen way again. I fear something will happen to me, or to you, for my weakness in yielding this once. Not for worlds would I have any of the retainers about the castle to see me now. I have promised to be yours, and I will keep my troth, so help me heaven, though all earth and the powers below strive against you. But I cannot openly disobey my dear father by an elopement. When you return, covered with glory from the wars, as I know well that you will, he will consent to our union; and then we shall both be happier for having followed the right, instead of obeying the temptation to do wrong."

"Your will is my law," said her companion, reverently kissing her hand. "Forgive me for having asked you to fly with me. I see that you are right in this as in all things else. Let me but win honor and lands, and even your proud father, the earl, must acknowledge that I am a fitting match for his child; for my blood is as noble as his own."

"I feel sure that you will succeed," said the sweet girl, looking fondly at him. "Who is braver than you?"

Her companion would have replied, but at that instant there rose, on the profound silence, what seemed the faint and distant sound of arms. Such a noise was unusual, even in those troubled times.

"Ha!" cried he. "There is trouble ahead. Hear you not those sounds?"

"I do hear them, Roland. But surely you are not going? You have no armor on."

"I have my sword," was the proud reply. "If there is a fight, one of the parties must be

for Edward of York, and even my poor blade may be needed in his behalf. Fortunately my steed is tied at the edge of the wood below. So farewell, dearest. To-morrow I hope to send you good news of your knight." And with a last fond embrace on his part, and some natural feminine tears on hers, he was gone.

It took but few minutes for Roland to gain his steed, to vault into the saddle, and to gallop in the direction of the sound of battle. As he hurried along, the clash of arms grew louder, and was mixed with shouts, among which he discovered the Lancasterian war-cry, and more faintly that of Edward of York. These latter finally ceased altogether, and then the others also were heard no more.

"It goes poorly with the king's men," said Roland, "but, perhaps, my arm can turn the battle: so on, good steed, on."

The period was that of the wars of the Roses, when the son of the murdered duke of York, had just ascended the English throne, under the title of Edward the Fourth. The realm was still filled with the disaffected, however, and pitched battles between the two parties were not unfrequent, while skirmishes were of almost weekly occurrence.

On reaching an open glade, in the midst of a forest, Roland came suddenly in view of the scene of strife. But the struggle appeared to be over. Four men-at-arms, wearing the badges of York, lay dead on the ground, and a fifth, though living, was prostrate. A huge knight, in dark armor stood over the latter, with his sword at the throat of the fallen man, while several followers, grim and bloody from the late fight, crowded behind.

"Yield thee, sir knight, or die the death," cried the dark warrior, shortening his blade to give the fatal blow.

"Edward never yields to traitors," cried the fallen man, "do your will, rebel that thou art."

"Then perish, upstart king," cried the dark warrior.

But the sword, though thrust angrily at the throat of the fallen monarch—for it was Edward the Fourth, beset on the return from one of his gay appointments, that lay there—never reached its destination. Shouting "a Roland, a Roland," our hero had dashed spurs into his horse, and

now rode down the dark warrior; while as the rebel fell, with one blow of his stout blade, he clove his skull in twain.

"Up, up, my liege," he cried, turning for an instant to the king. "I will keep the varlets in play till you have recovered a sword. I saw two lying beside your dead retainers." And then, dashing into the midst of the surprised rebels, who had not even yet recovered their presence of mind, he hewed down first one, and then another, wheeling his horse with almost miraculous rapidity, so as both to escape blows himself and to deal them to others: all the time shouting, as if he had an army at his back, "a Roland, a Roland, to the rescue."

The monarch, ever as brave in arms as he was successful in love, was not long in availing himself of Roland's advice, and soon appeared to the assistance of the latter. But, short as the time had been, the field was already clear. Consternation had done much, and the good sword of Roland more. Already four had fallen under that tenchant blade, when the four that remained, seeing the king coming to the aid of this terrible knight, and not knowing how many retainers might be hurrying through the woods, took to sudden flight.

"By my crown and realm," said the king, "you have done what no other knight, in all England, could have achieved so quickly. There is nothing left for me to do."

"My liege," said Roland, leaping from his horse, and sinking on his knee, "I have only done what any man, had he seen his king in peril, could have done as well; for when the safety of these broad realms is at stake, by the life of their rightful monarch being in danger, even a woman's arm would have a giant's strength."

"Well said, young sir," said Edward. "But rise, rise! Or stay," he added, suddenly, seeing that Roland wore no knightly spurs, "are you not yet a son of chivalry?"

"I have yet to win my spurs," replied Roland.

"Then, by all the saints, knight you shall be before you rise, for never did squire win spurs more nobly than you have done to-night. Your name."

"Roland Bohem."

"What, the heir of the old line? Rise, Sir Roland Bohem," and he struck him on the shoulder as he spoke. "And as I trow, from what I know of your family history, that you are not over-rich in this world's goods, having lost all in my father's cause, it shall be my duty to hunt you out certain rich manors to pay you for this night's work. But now, tell me, how came you here."

In a few words Roland explained that, having

heard the sound of arms, he had hurried to the scene. He would have stopped here, but the good-natured monarch, who had observed the speaker's embarrassment, suspected that all was not told; and so cross-questioned our hero, with such mingled authority, adroitness and kindness, that Roland was fain, at last, to reveal the whole.

"Ha, sits the wind in that quarter?" said the royal Edward. "You shall not repent making me your confidant. I know the good earl well. He has been rather luke-warm, but now seeks to make his peace with me, and will not miss a good opportunity, such as my suit in your behalf will offer. I will hie to his castle to-night, for I must sleep somewhere, and am too tired to return to court. You shall accompany me, and, to-morrow, hear more."

All was uproar in the castle of Earl Dalton, when it became known that the king had been beset, in the neighboring forest, had barely escaped with his life, and had come to demand a night's lodging, and that litters should be sent out to bring in the dead bodies of his henchmen. The earl himself rose trembling from bed, and came to welcome his royal master, fearful that suspicion might fall on him, since the attack had happened in his woods. Roland, at the monarch's request, did not appear at this interview, but sought the old chamber he had occupied when a page, for it was in that capacity, and in the Dalton Castle, as the reader may have guessed ere this, that he had won the Lady Elizabeth's heart.

The next day the castle was thronged with anxious courtiers, who having heard of Edward's peril, had ridden down from London to congratulate the king on his escape. But it was not until the sun was high in heaven that the monarch appeared, for he had slept long after his fatigue, and had subsequently been closeted, in secret, with his host. At last, however, he entered the great hall, amid the acclamations of his subjects, who crowded around to testify their loyalty.

"All excellently well," jestingly said the king, "glad to see your king safe, I have no doubt, though he owes nothing to your good swords for being so. But make way, lords and gentlemen, for here comes the Lady Elizabeth, queen of hearts and beauty, whose espousals you are happily present to witness."

As he spoke, the earl's daughter entered the hall, richly attired, and attended by a long train of maidens. Never had she looked so lovely. It was apparent that she was, at least, no unwilling bride, for never could a lustre so sweet fill the eyes, nor smile so happy wreath the lips of one forced to the altar.

"My Lord of Dalton," said the king, turning to her father, a proud, but timid nobleman, whose

whole life had been consumed in accumulating wealth and trimming between York and Lancaster, "it is with your free consent, I believe, that you give your daughter away to the good earl, in whose favor I have asked her hand, I vouching that his lineage is noble in all respects, and that his broad acres equal your daughter's dowry."

"It is, my liege," said he, bowing low. "Your majesty had but to name the boon, and I accorded it at once, being eager to testify my love to your house and my loyalty to the throne."

"Stand forth then, Roland, Earl of Langleat," said the king, advancing, and laying his hand on the shoulder of our hero, who, hitherto had stood in the background. "Receive your bride," and with the words, he placed the hand of the Lady Elizabeth in that of Roland. "Now both of ye kneel to my Lord of Dalton, and ask his paternal blessing."

From the start of the old earl it was evident that he had been kept in ignorance of the fact, that it was his former page who was to wed his daughter. In truth the monarch, who ever loved a jest, had purposely concealed this.

"But, my liege," at last stammered the old earl, still drawing back, and gazing in amazement from the pair to the monarch, and then from the monarch to the pair. "This is my own page, who left me not a twelvemonth ago: no knight, much less belted earl."

"Knight and belted earl both," said the monarch, laughing, "and holding of me, by my free gift, broad manors that once were his ancestors, and which I have confiscated from the Lancastrian thieves who dispossessed the old Bohems, whose name and blood he inherits. Nay, sir earl, put a good grace on the affair, and bless them: don't you see the Lady Elizabeth is nothing loath. Remember, I have your promise. All the conditions are fulfilled on my part."

Thus pressed, the old noble blessed the youthful couple, though with a dubious and concerned

look, as if he fancied there was some trick about it; for he could not, as yet, realize the sudden change which had occurred in Roland's fortunes. But the next words of the king revealed all to his bewildered mind.

"And now, lords and gentlemen," said the monarch, taking the youthful pair in either hand, and advancing to the front of the dais, "let me introduce you to the Lady Elizabeth Dalton, loveliest of her sex, and to her espoused husband, Sir Roland Bohem, Earl of Langleat, peerless knight, and true liegeman, but for whose arm your king would, last night, have died under the sword of an assassin."

He had scarcely finished when a shout went up from the spectators, that made even the spacious hall of the castle shake and shake again: and when this had died away, a hundred hands were extended to grasp that of Roland, while a hundred voices congratulated him on his courage and his good fortune.

A year from that day saw the young earl married to his lovely Elizabeth. History records how King Edward gave the bride away; how there were jousts and tournaments for days in succession; and how the bridegroom was the handsomest knight, as his bride was the loveliest lady at all these entertainments. But one little incident, which history has overlooked, we must narrate before we finish.

"Ah! did I not tell you," said the bride, when alone with her husband, "that, if we trusted in heaven, all would go right."

"You did, dearest, and were a true prophet," said Roland, fondly kissing her. But he added, archly, "and yet, after all, and in spite of your prognostications of evil, we owe not a little to that moonlight ramble."

On that subject they differed to their dying day. They never quarrelled about anything else, however, but lived as happily as they lived long. Therefore, good reader, do not let us quarrel even on that subject.

THE BLACKSMITH'S DAUGHTER.

BY SYBIL HASTINGS.

CHAPTER I.

AN impulsive, buoyant, never-drooping spirit had Mary Rayson, or Mollie, as she was called by most of her numerous friends; and they comprised nearly all the inhabitants of Peacedale, the village where she was born and reared to girlhood. We wish we could describe her bright heart smile; her dark, fathomless eyes of hazel; her tall, reed-like figure with its willowy grace; the girlish abandon with which she yields herself to thrilling music; or sunny beam upon the lip, born of gushing merriment. But language is too weak to picture all this. They who knew Mary Rayson as the world only knows woman, knew her but as the idle gazer knows the sea, with the frail bubbles floating bright upon its surface, utterly unconscious of the jewels slumbering fathoms down below.

On the morning from which we date as the commencement of our story, clear and loud echoed the bell from the belfry of the old meeting-house. Just as the fall of footsteps, and the creaking of pew doors died away with the tolling of the bell, the tall figure of the minister rose erect in the pulpit. He prayed with simple eloquence for his Father's children gathered there beneath his spiritual guidance, and for all earth's wanderers. While he prayed, a shadow fell on the sunlit floor, and a tall stranger, in fashionable attire, stood just within the entrance. He had paused directly beneath the orchestra, and stood there till the hymn was given out, but when a sweet, bird-like voice, requiring cultivation but wondrously musical, mingled with the peal from the organ, swelling through the old meeting-house, and rising clear above all other voices, he passed, with a quick, firm tread, up the aisle, and entered the pew of Dr. Allen, raising his eyes half wonderingly, half questioningly to the singers.

A face, a figure girlish in the extreme met his glance, but a face so fair, so innocent as to rivet his attention at once. The dark brown tresses were clustered in rich curls over brow and bosom; the glow was deep and warm upon that youthful cheek; while the parted lips half smiled as the soft notes gushed forth. There was nothing rustic in the young girl's attire; it was neat, almost elegant in its simplicity, and a doubt flashed over the mind of William Richmond as to her being

a resident of Peacedale. But it was quickly dispelled, when the services of the morning being terminated, he beheld a tall, deep-chested man, with toil browned hands, but dark, deep-set eyes, and a certain proud bearing that involuntarily inspired respect, approach to conduct her home. Eager to learn who she was, the young collegian, as soon as the congregation dispersed, asked her name of his relative, Dr. Allen; and learnt that she was Mary Rayson, the only child of David Rayson, the blacksmith of the village.

With all those false ideas of society which can see no nobility in those whose necessities require labor, William Richmond smiled in derision at himself to think that a humble artisan's daughter had nearly beguiled him into admiration. But, as time wore away, and day after day he saw Mary Rayson in the street, an intense desire, irresistible with all his pride and worldliness, to know her better, stole over him. But several weeks passed ere the opportunity was his, for there was no intercourse between the Allens and the Raysons, the former holding themselves somewhat aloof from most of the villagers. At length an accident occurred to assist him beyond his most sanguine expectations.

There had been the report of a dog in a rabid state seen in the woods not far distant; but little credence was given to the tale. One morning, however, William Richmond, with his gun and game-bag, entered the woods at an early hour. He had been out some time, and was walking leisurely forward in the direction of the village, when a wild, despairing cry for help rang through the woods from the opening a few rods beyond, and was echoed by a more distant voice. Richmond bounded forward in its direction; other cries following. He soon gained the opening, where he saw a young lady sinking fainting upon the green sward; while a mad dog, covered with foam, was dashing toward her. The young man immediately raised his piece: one loud report, and then another, in swift succession, arrested the ferocious creature in his progress, and laid him dead upon the field.

A smile of triumph and of joy lit up the gazer's features as he looked down upon the face of the insensible girl, for he recognized in her Mary Rayson.

Barely three weeks went by, ere one soft

summer evening, as he sat within the little parlor, with Mary Rayson by his side, and told his love. He spoke with all the impassioned eloquence of youth; pleading for a return upon her part: and it was accorded to him. Perchance then, in that witching hour of evening, with the sweet face raised to his, he was guiltless of insincerity.

With fervent gratitude and cordial hospitality the father had welcomed to his home the preserver of his motherless girl; and in that home William Richmond had met no ignorance to mortify, no vulgarity to shock the most fastidious taste: all there was simple and plain, but not to barrenness, for the hand of Mary filled the rooms with flowers, and the father's liberality placed choice and valuable books upon the table, and ministered with no sparing care to the culture of his child's intellect.

An intelligent, honorable man was David Rayson, owning no superior but his God, bowing in reverence to virtue alone. His only inheritance to his daughter was a name, untarnished by the faintest shadow of dishonor. He passed as proudly to his forge as the great statesman to the hall of legislature. He was one who recognized no degradation, but in false word or base deed. And this was the man whom Richmond presumed to look upon as his inferior. This was the man, whose profession, as the weak, young collegian thought, rendered Mary Rayson, the beautiful and good, too lowly for a rich man's bride.

But she knew it not, dreamed it not, until weeks of sweet hopes and glad joyousness had passed. Then, when an imperative summons reached Richmond from home, where his attentions to Mary Rayson had become known: then, when worldliness conquered what he dared to desecrate as love, by giving its name to mere sensual passion; then, when with a burst of selfish sorrow he told Mary Rayson, that loving her he must leave her to return no more, and besought her not to put his memory from her heart as one unworthy, but still to love him in absence and hopelessness; then the veil was lifted, and in his arrogance, his utter selfishness and littleness, he stood revealed to her. The first cloud of life had stolen over her, and the storm raged fierce and wild in that young bosom; but soon all the pride of womanhood stirred within her spirit, and hushed the wild, despairing cry which rose agonizingly in her heart.

She looked upon him without bitterness. He had given her life when a terrible death yawned before her; and, for that she was his debtor. She neither hated him nor scorned him, but *she pitied* him, and told him so. He saw it was not pride which dictated her words, that it was simple truth; and his very brow burnt with the

consciousness; but still he dared to beseech her yet to love him; and once more she spoke; and again there was no doubting her: she had ceased to love him. She had loved an ideal of her own creation, not him. And thus they parted, he with his pride humbled, but loving her more sincerely than heretofore; she pitying him, but utterly indifferent.

Long she remained by the window where he left her, but her glance followed him not as he passed down the garden walk for the last time, and no tears fell upon her white cheek. Weeks passed on, and William Richmond's name was never mentioned. Mary had told her father that he had proved to be unworthy of affection; and though the old man had a faint suspicion of the truth, he did not question her. The father saw that his child sorrowed as one who had been grievously disappointed, but that all love was over for William Richmond, and that Mary strove earnestly to forget the past. She succeeded at length; but she no longer possessed that girlish joyousness, that child like freedom from all care, which had previously marked her character, she grew more womanly, more thoughtful. The shadow of life had passed over her, making her more serious, more gentle, and she was lovelier than ever. And now to the father's affection for his daughter was added more reverence and confidence. He had not looked for such firmness in the indulged, sometimes wayward, but ever loving child.

Late in the autumn, Mr. Rayson received a letter from a younger sister of his lost wife, who had been separated much since her marriage from her own family, and who in consequence had not seen Mary since her early childhood, inviting her niece to spend the winter with herself and daughter in New York and Boston. It cost him no slight sacrifice of his own feelings to bring himself to part with his daughter, and Mary herself at first refused to leave him; but when he urged it upon her, and something in her own heart whispered her it would be better for her to do so, she finally consented; and the first of November was decided upon as the period of leaving Peacedale.

Mr. Rayson's means were not ample, but still sufficient to equip his daughter neatly, and genteelly, if not elegantly, for her visit to the city. But Mrs. Foster's loving care and pride, on receiving to her home the beautiful child of her lost sister, soon supplied all deficiencies, and Mary Rayson, with her grace and loveliness, won many hearts on her first appearance in the brilliant drawing-room of her beloved aunt.

Life now began to recover its joyousness and sunshine to Mary Rayson; and her long letters home were filled with glowing accounts of the

festive scenes in which she moved, and the kindness of Mrs. Foster and her daughter Alice. Once more she was happy. But still troubled thoughts would occasionally come to mar the present, and the beautiful lip would quiver in the crowded saloon. Often as she was receiving homage and brilliant adulation, she would question herself sorrowfully if it would be thus, were her position known.

One morning about six weeks after her arrival in New York, she went out to walk alone, immediately after breakfast. The air was clear and keen, and she drew her mantle very close about her. She had not proceeded far, before a poor, miserable-looking child of seven or eight years, standing upon the pavement, shivering with the cold, attracted her attention; and she paused as it stretched forth its half frozen hand, and placed a small sum within it. It was no ostentatious charity in Mary Rayson; there was apparently not a soul besides in the street; it was but the warm impulse of a generous heart. But she was not unobserved. Before a print window, seemingly gazing in upon its contents, stood a gentleman, whose attention nevertheless had been attracted by the sweet, low voice. His glance wandered to her fair face, and painted it in fadeless colors upon his memory. Days, weeks, months went by; and in solitude those low tones lingered on his ear, that sweet face smiled upon Clifton Hall.

A dim hope of meeting her, a vague presentiment that with the destiny of the young stranger his own was linked, haunted him, and would not disappear. But still time passed on, and she crossed not his path. He had long lost every hope of seeing her, when until one morning in the following spring, at an early hour he was crossing Boston Common. Suddenly his attention was riveted to the figure of a woman a few rods before him. She was walking leisurely forward in the same direction as himself, and apparently enjoying the beauty of the morning hour. She was dressed in a simple gingham morning dress, and wore a straw hat trimmed with white ribbon. When she gained the opposite entrance to the common, she turned to retrace her steps, and once more the soft, dark eyes of the vision of his dreams beamed full and clear upon Clifton Hall.

CHAPTER II.

THE rays of a lighted astral diffused a soft, mellow light through the spacious back drawing-room of Mrs. Charles Hall; while the contents of a fine conservatory beyond filled the apartment with fragrance. It was no home of today's inhabitance—its inmates were no people

of yesterday. The same fine paintings which adorned the walls, hung there, had hung there for years. A graceful man, of some five and twenty years, sat by the centre-table, with his deep-set eyes of blue, bent upon an open volume, which he held in his hands. His thoughts were, however, wandering far away from the page before him. While he remained thus buried in thought, there stole a sweet voice to his ear, breaking in upon his reveries, as a light figure came bounding through hall, calling upon her brother's name; then the door opened, and a pretty young creature, in a white evening dress, came dancing in to his side, heedless of the affectionate embrace crushing the soft folds of her dress, as he wound his arm lovingly about her.

"What were you dreaming of, Cliff? for dreaming you were I know by that quiet, subdued expression, and half smile upon your lip."

"Of one as bright as yourself, sweetheart."

"Caught at last! in love at length, Cliff! Who is it? Do I know her? Does she live in Boston? May I——"

"Hush! not so fast quite, sweetheart. To the two first exclamations I answer yes, to the three or four last inquiries I can answer with no degree of certainty, having put to myself more than once these very same questions, and received yet no satisfactory answer."

Kate Hall's countenance displayed much skepticism, if not actual doubt of her brother's words as he spoke, and with a merry smile she went on.

"Then, Cliff, you would have one to understand that you have fallen in love with one whom you neither know, nor have seen; some paragon of excellence, my dear brother, is it not, who is indefatigable in ministering to the whims of our respected maiden Cousin Deborah, or our bachelor Uncle Jonathan, and who in return does her the kindness to extoll her as a pattern young maiden to a model young gentleman like yourself?"

"Again you are in error, *chere* Kate. We have met, or the memory of a face of exquisite loveliness, a voice sweet and low-toned were not now lingering on mine ear; but twice only have we met; and yet, Kate, had I the power to do so, I would marry this woman without one fear for the future. Meeting her not until before the altar, I stand ready to pledge to her vows as faithful as ever passed the lips of manhood."

"And you do not even know her name, Cliff?" questioned Kate, in deep surprise, her merriment for the moment subdued by her companion's earnestness.

"No, nor where she lives, nor whence she came, but don't imagine, Kate, it is bright eyes or sweet smile alone which has captivated me."

"And what in heaven's name if, I may ask,

then is it, which has conquered this impenetrable fortress?" continued his laughing companion, holding up her white hands in feigned amazement.

"An act very trivial, but speaking much to myself, more than a thousand words breathed aloud could have done. The first time I beheld her was when I visited New York, during the winter. One morning, as I stood looking into a window filled with prints, a very sweet and low voice near by attracted my attention. A young lady had paused to speak to a poor, miserable-looking child, standing upon the *pave*, shivering with the cold. With the same tenderness with which I have beheld fond mothers do the same thing, I perceived her tie her own handkerchief about the child's throat to shield it from the cold. I will not say that had she been devoid of grace and beauty, I could have loved her for that deed, but however plain I should have revered her memory. I see, dear Kate, your bright eyes are eloquent now with interest."

But it was growing late; the carriage had been long in waiting for them; for there was a brilliant party that night at their friend Mrs. Francis'; and Clifton Hall paused only at Kate's request to gather her a bouquet from the conservatory. Was it a presentiment of the call which he would have for a certain exquisite white bud, blooming alone on a tall rose-tree, the last of the season, that compelled him to cull it and place it in his bosom, though scarce conscious at the moment of the act?

The music of the band was swelling through the spacious apartments of their hostess, and dancing had already commenced, as Clifton Hall, with his sister on his arm, approached Mrs. Francis to offer their salutations. The next moment Kate had relinquished his arm for that of another gentleman, who led her forward amid the dancers, and he himself was free to select a partner. He had half crossed the apartment for the purpose, when the voice of a gentleman by his side questioned eagerly,

"Can you tell me, Hall, who that divine creature is, dancing so bewitchingly with Vernon?"

There was a sudden thrill in the heart of Clifton Hall, and he forgot to answer his interrogator, as nearer and yet nearer floated the light figure of Mary Rayson, until the white folds of her dress brushed to and fro against him, as the fairy foot fell in measure to the thrilling music, in the half coquettish, half careless abandon of the *schottische*.

Half an hour afterward he himself was floating down that brilliant saloon, with the same little hand captive in his own, whose careless deeds weeks previous had captivated him beyond the passing hour. More than once he danced with

Mary Rayson, more than once he found himself by Mrs. Foster's side, who accompanied Mary, conversing with herself and niece as though they were old acquaintances. He soon learnt that Mary had been spending the winter with Mrs. Foster in New York, and was then accompanying her to her home, with the intention of leaving Boston the succeeding evening. He had danced the last polka; waltzed the last waltz with Mary; caught the last envious glance from Brown Vernon; and now stood in the small room where sherberts and iced lemonade during the evening had refreshed the votaries of the dance. His companion was growing weary of the bright lights. The air was fresher, the music came in softer tones to her there, as she leaned carelessly back in her chair shaking thoughtfully the ice in her half emptied goblet, with her dark eyes bent earnestly upon him as he spoke. But suddenly the fair cheek, which had slightly paled with fatigue, glowed with a deep, warm blush. She arose hastily, and with proud dignity stood erect, her clear, dark eyes bent in earnest scrutiny upon him. They drooped not beneath her gaze. Still his lip retained its serene smile, its sincere, truthful expression.

He had been speaking to her apparently of another, of her who had won his reverence and his affection, to her the brief acquaintance of an evening, and the conviction of the identity of herself, with her of whom he was speaking, rushed over her.

The long lashes drooped over the gazing eyes, the young head bowed lower, a fainter color was upon her cheek, a sweet, blissful hope was waking in her heart. If she was loved at length for something less perishable than the affection born of her mere beauty, was it not a love which would prove itself superior to idle prejudices? Would it not be brave where another's had wanted courage? She glanced up to see that it was no mockery, and still the same serene, truthful gaze was upon her.

Speaking no word, Clifton Hall took the white bud from his vest, and offered it to Mary Rayson. She placed it, timidly and blushing the while, amid the soft folds of her berth. Then together they passed on to the drawing-room. His hand handed her to the carriage, and as she took her seat therein, he said, loud enough for the ear of her aunt, "I shall call upon you in the morning, Miss Rayson."

"Was I not too premature in my conclusion, at least in betraying it to Mr. Hall?" questioned the beautiful girl, with a sudden emotion of timidity and humiliation. But the memory of those earnest tones, that eloquent glance, fell like dew upon the passing pang of pride; while a tranquil sensation of happiness settled down

upon her heart, filling her dreams through the night with sunshine.

The first object that her eyes rested upon, in the light of morning, was the white bud unfolding into a rose, in the glass of water in which she had placed it, upon her dressing-table, the previous night.

She did not take that morning her accustomed walk; she felt in spite of herself too much agitated to go out, in the prospect of her approaching interview with Clifton Hall. The last words which he had uttered had been so significant. Still she tried to bring herself to anticipate his visit, with the same unconcern which she would have experienced in receiving any other gentleman; and she fancied that she had succeeded. But the color which deepened and faded alternately upon her cheek, as the servant announced his presence in the parlor, and her aunt desired her to make her excuses to Mr. Hall, as she was suffering from a severe headache, betrayed the slight fluttering of her girlish heart. Yet Clifton Hall read no token of the embarrassment of Mary Rayson, as she greeted him with quiet courtesy, and he drew a seat to her side.

For a brief space he conversed with her as a mere ordinary acquaintance, then he paused abruptly, and there was a moment's embarrassing silence, which Mary herself was on the point of dispelling, when he anticipated her by commencing abruptly,

"You will perchance think me very rash, very presuming to address you, Miss Rayson, as I am about to do. Still I trust that you will have the courage to forget that an avowal so premature is not in accordance with the customary rules of society; the goodness to overlook the seeming presumption of one a comparative stranger to you, thus boldly offering for your acceptance his love. Think it not but a boyish passion; that my mere fancy is taken captive, Miss Rayson, by the charm of your presence; but a deep, abiding sentiment born of something more stable than imagination, based on principle, springing from a deed holy in its impulse. I will not ask for a return of the love which I now offer to you, but permission to visit you at your own home, with a faint hope that honor and love may win you hereafter to regard me as something dearer than father or brother. And oh, Mary," he continued, bending nearer in his earnestness, and for the first time taking one white hand prisoner within his own, "with the thought of you I have woven so many bright, fair hopes, unconscious of my boldness until you have come before me, the realization of all that I have dreamed of as fairest and best in womanhood. Could you know, could you form any conception, Mary, of the holy pictures in which I have dared, in the might of

my love to paint you as my own idolized wife; you would not refuse me. But if there is any one reason why you may never love me I conjure you now to tell it to me." A sharp, sudden pang shot through his listener's heart, rousing her from the exquisite happiness which she had for the moment felt in hearing him. The hand which had been warm within his own grew cold with his last words, and she shivered slightly. The ice which had once before frozen in her heart, with tones which thrilled her spirit with their tenderness, seemed again to gather cold and chill therein. She felt her momentary dream of joy was over; but she was firm; she did not shrink from the trial; for with the vision of the father, even then toiling at his forge, came also a flood of tenderness for him. Could she desire a love that would droop because he, the dear, good, old man, called her child? Was it not unworthy her? But still the tenderness of womanly affection made the sweet voice lower, more tremulous than its wont as she spoke.

"There are two reasons why I may not yet accept the affection which you proffer. The first is, that you meet me here in a different position from what I am accustomed to occupy in my own home; here fashion and wealth surround me; there I have neither. My home is a lowly, but a happy one; my father a generous, honorable man, but a poor one; one who for his own and his child's support is not ashamed to labor with his own hands; who sees no degradation in honest toil;—a blacksmith. Others have seen disgrace in my father's calling: if it is thus with you also, do not shrink from acknowledging it. I shall not look upon you with bitterness, but as another victim to society."

He heard her all through patiently to the last word, and his answer was a kiss; so holy, so reverentially placed upon the honest lips, which had grown paler with each passing word, that she made no effort to resent it.

"If the remaining reason is so trivial, do not do me the injustice to name it," he said, gently. But now there was a doubt in his companion's heart, whether it would not be of far more importance to him than the previous. And it required a stronger effort to reveal. Once indeed there flashed over her a doubt as to its necessity. Many women, situated as she then was, would not have hesitated to conceal it; but not so with Mary Rayson. She repelled instantly the voice of the tempter, but her cheek grew whiter than it had ever been before, and she waited many moments for that firmness which came lingeringly to her assistance.

Clifton Hall marked the struggle, and turned aside his face, that she might not perceive any anguish that her words might inflict. It was

well that he did so, for a spasm of acute pain shot over his countenance, as she told him, in a voice so low, so clear that its faintest whisper was distinct, of a period when she had loved another. But as truth conquered pride, and word after word welled forth so sadly earnest, that he felt every hidden thought was gradually revealed to him, he became convinced that the first, fresh affection of girlhood's heart was not with her a wasted treasure, that it had not been given to mortal man, although she herself had deemed it so, but to an ideal of her own creation, and gathered back into her own heart when the illusion was over, to be kept there bright and undimmed for the realization of that ideal.

The first anguish passed, with irresistible eloquence he convinced her that to him her love would be still precious. Thus Mary Rayson became the promised bride of Clifton Hall, without one shadow of falsehood to lay dark and chill between them.

The white roses were budding in Peacedale, when a travelling carriage, with Clifton Hall and his sister Kate seated therein, drove rapidly through the village street, and drew up before the home of Mary Rayson. Kate marked a bright smile steal over her brother's lip, as they passed a certain brown old building, a few rods from the cottage. Ere it faded he was greeting his affianced wife, and receiving the almost tearful blessing of the old man. Even the heart of the gay Kate was touched by the murmured "God bless you," over her noble brother, bending his stately head to that tremulous benediction. But all awe soon passed in the bewildering excitement of bridal preparations, as half wild with joy and excitement, she chattered of the beautiful flowers which should grace her hair on the morrow, as bride's-maid to Mary.

And that morrow came, as clear and bright a day as ever dawned upon earth, since its creation. The bell from the old belfry rang a merry peal, and kind wishes were showered on the head of the fair young bride, as she passed down the broad aisle of the old meeting-house, with the bridal roses in her hair; most beautiful in her joyousness and hope, leaning upon the arm which she had chosen through life to be her support, in sorrow and in joy.

But the flowers which she laid aside with her bridal roses, as sacred relics of that day, was the withered bud, the first token of her husband's love, and a sprig of honeysuckle from the vine creeping over the small, time-worn blacksmith's shop.

CHAPTER III.

THREE years have passed since the marriage of Mary Rayson. It is evening, and she is seated

in a handsome library, writing at the same table with her still young and handsome husband. Time has but touched to beautify the fair features; and the promise of her early girlhood, of graceful womanhood is well fulfilled. There is all the ease of one accustomed to society in her every movement, all the winning artlessness of a pure, true heart, radiating from her face. The dark, soft hair no longer falls in ringlets about her brow, but in satin like bands is wound about her little head; the color is not quite so deep upon her cheek; there is a softer light in her large eyes; and ever and anon her lip quivers with feeling, or parts with a glad smile. She does not know that her husband is gazing upon her, for he has a book within his hand, but his thoughts are busied with her alone. They have wandered back to the winter morning when first they met, to the hour when the old minister who had christened her in infancy gave her the holy name of wife: and through intervening years always the same loving, gentle spirit. He called her an angel as he gazed upon her; he prayed his "God to bless her;" his heart thrilled with a fear lest she should be taken from him as one too worthy of him. He longed to rise and throw his arms about her, and murmur as he had done a thousand times, "my Mary;" but he did not like to disturb her then.

And Mary was writing to Kate, who had been recently married, and lived in a neighboring city. It was too long a letter for us to give here, but we would quote one passage, to show the great secret of the unruffled serenity of her wedded life.

"You write me, darling Kate, of your desire to keep from your husband's knowledge, the trifling affair of which you and myself are alone cognizant, and which, having occurred before marriage, you do not think concerns him; but still you feel that it would annoy him. Kate, be brave! have more confidence in your husband, even though at first it may pain him; be sure he will love you better, respect you more than ever. By any unforeseen accident, should it become revealed to him, he would fancy that you have concealed it from motives more unworthy than mere cowardice; and an incident in reality of no moment would become serious. Do not think, love, that I am only exhibiting the penchant, married women have for moralizing with young wives; but through an affection for you, darling sister, that will not be repressed. You have spoken with enthusiasm of the holy serenity of the love existing between your brother and myself. Kate, it is born of mutual trust; there can be no pure, no abiding love without it."

The young wife had written thus far when a letter was brought in to her husband. He

appeared somewhat disturbed, and laid it down with a troubled expression. Mary arose instantly and approached him, not to question him, she never did, for she felt that of his own accord he would tell her all that it was well for her to know; but to part the soft, brown hair caressingly back from his intellectual brow, speaking in those sweet, low tones peculiar to her, and so winning in all women.

"Have you been busy to-day, dear Cliff? You look wearied to-night."

"Somewhat annoyed, darling. The father of the young man, who has been arrested for the forgery of a heavy draft upon Wilkinson, has been to me this afternoon, urging upon me the defence of his son: he was very urgent, but I refused his solicitations, and now he again writes to importune me."

"But why do you refuse him? It is not your wont, my husband, to refuse those who look to you for aid."

"Because, *chere wife*, I utterly despise the whole character of the prisoner, which has been, since boyhood, one long career of reckless, unprincipled conduct." He said no more, for the face of Mary had grown strangely pallid, and the open letter which she held within her hand rattled with the shudder which passed over her.

"Are you ill, my Mary! my darling!" he cried.

But she answered, "no, not ill, Clifton," and bowed her face down upon the table before him and wept, not passionately or bitterly, but sorrowfully for a few brief moments. Then she raised her face, no longer pallid but full of pleading hopefulness to him, laid her finger upon the prisoner's name, at the conclusion of the letter before her, saying, fearlessly and earnestly,

"This was he whom I once fancied I loved, he who once saved my life. My husband, will you not plead for him? Rescue him if it be in man's power from infamy."

For a moment's space he looked upon her steadily, but the lashes drooped not over those starry eyes, and his own glance went down amid their fathomless depths, until all the glorious sunshine of the spirit, warm and bright, streamed over his own. His tongue was mute, it had no power to express the love, the reverence for her, sweeping in one resistless tide of tenderness over his heart. But he answered firmly,

"I will, my Mary."

And again she went back to her letter to Kate: again she wrote.

"I had written the above, when there came to my own spirit, yet more vividly from an incident which has this moment occurred, the necessity of that truth which I would urge upon you, Kate, in your husband. Once I myself was sorely tempted to deceive; had I yielded to the voice

of the tempter, oh! my sister, this hour had witnessed bitter remorse, wild, terrible despair. I could not have pleaded for his aid to rescue from dishonor worse than death, one to whom I am indebted, next to God, for the life once fearfully threatened."

Something over three weeks after the above was written, one very cold, stormy night, old Mr. Rayson, in a large, easy-chair wheeled, near the grate filled with glowing anthracite, was seated reading the evening papers, in the drawing-room of his son-in-law in Boston. It was a large, luxurious apartment, and the whole arrangement of the furniture, the paintings and flowers, which adorned the room, gave evidence of the presiding taste of an elegant woman. In a dress of soft crimson cashmere, buttoned close to the slender throat, with its small collar of delicate lace, and the same rich material half shading the small hands, wandering over the keys of the piano, was Mary, singing to her husband one of the sweet old English ballads he loved so well. He was looking uncommonly animated, with a certain air of proud triumph, as though a great object had been achieved; and well he might; for the power of his eloquence had that day cleared the darkened name of William Richmond.

While the young wife sang to him, the hall bell rang, and the next moment he was summoned to the library to meet a gentleman there awaiting him. It was just back of the drawing-room, from whence a large bay window, then closed and half shrouded by a curtain, opened into it.

As Mr. Hall left the room, the old gentleman by the fire arose, and approached his daughter, requesting her to sing to him a song which she had been wont to do in her own home. She did so, and the notes which echoed around floated on to the library, falling, like half forgotten music, upon the ear of the rescued man, who had come in his gratitude to thank his preserver. Clifton Hall listened silently and gravely to his words of eloquent gratitude, and when he had ended, answered quietly,

"It is not to me that your gratitude is due. Would you behold one at whose urgent solicitations I undertook your defence?"

His companion bowed in assent, and he went out, but just as the door closed upon him, William Richmond started up, listening eagerly. He was sure he knew that voice: more and more certain as it swelled upon his ear. He caught a glimpse of the partially veiled window, sprang forward, lifted a fold of the curtain, and gazed in upon the three there. He saw that Clifton Hall was waiting only the last word upon the singer's lips, to bring her to him; and that singer, oh! it was Mary Rayson, the forsaken, but only loved woman whom he had ever met.

But how came she there? And the old, despised blacksmith in that luxurious drawing-room? What had she to do with Olifton Hall, the great lawyer?

But he had no time to question himself farther, for she arose, she was coming to him, ah, and alone! Did she know who she was to meet? No, or she had not been so calm, so serene.

In the centre of the apartment, directly beneath the shaded light, he stood when she entered; but he had bowed his face within his hands. He had no courage to look up; he dared not until the sweet voice questioned timidly, "did you desire to see me, sir?" Then he sprang forward, knelt down at her feet, and raised his worn, haggard face to hers, murmuring passionately, "is it thus, oh, Mary Rayson, that we meet?" She half shrank from him as she recognized him, but the next moment, with the same calm, pitying look which he had last beheld, years previous, she gazed upon him. He was wild with joy that at length they had met; he prayed her despairingly

to pardon and forget the past; he questioned her almost angrily as to what she did there: and then it was very painful to perceive how cold and rigid he grew with suffering, when she told him that she was a wife, not triumphantly, not exultingly, but gently and quietly. She was not one to exult over any one, much less the fallen. But oh! she plead with him like an angel from heaven to reform, and strove to comfort him. He knew then that it was her, who he had wronged, that had saved him from dishonor; and all the buried goodness of his being awoke within him. No longer with wild words he wrung the pitying spirit. With a mighty effort he subdued his anguish, blessed her, and turned to depart.

She stretched forth her hand to him, and he bowed his head low above it. When he relinquished it, it was damp with his tears; and her own rained upon the crimson carpet.

Her husband's voice roused her, his gentle caress soothed her. His wife's gratitude, and never changing love were his reward.

THE STOLEN MARRIAGE.

BY MISS JANE STRICKLAND.

A CLANDESTINE marriage generally is a mysterious matter, without bridesmaids and bridesmen, cake, wedding favors, bouquets, smiles, jests, and other legitimate sources of mirthfulness, usually supposed to attend upon bridal where relative and friends meet together to witness the spousal rite. The union, unblessed by parents, is never joyous; it has often its misgivings, sometimes tears, and always after-repentance. The stolen marriage of John Brandon and Patty Bloomfield differed in some respects from clandestine marriages in general; it was celebrated in the face of the whole congregation immediately before the commencement of the morning service, to the infinite delight of matron and maid, aye, and of the children, too. Bachelors, young and old, alike seemed interested in the rite that made the timid, shrinking bride the wedded wife of the manly, fine, independent-looking fellow who had, in a voice that echoed along the only aisle of our parish church, vowed to "take her for better and worse, until death should them part." Patty seemed to feel her responsibility far more than her tall, upright partner; her vow was almost inaudible; her small, slight figure drooped, and a tear fell on the ring the lover fixed on her finger. The final blessing was scarcely spoken, before the bridegroom nodded and smiled upon the bride, as much as to remind her that, in spite of all obstacles, he had made good his promise of taking her, and her only, for his wedded wife. She looked up with a smile which gleamed like a sunbeam in the midst of her tears and blushes, signed her maiden name for the last time, took her tall bridegroom's arms, and vanished like a vision from the church, so sudden and stealthy was her departure. The whole affair resembled in nothing a stolen marriage, if the absence of relatives, and the choice of the clerk as the person to give away the bride, had not suggested something of the sort to the congregation. The surmise was quite correct; the union solemnized between John Brandon, cabinet-maker, and Martha Bloomfield, was quite against the wishes of their respective families, the parents of the parties having formed higher views for their children. The objection seems too ridiculous, but the reader must bear in mind that this is a true story, and a real stolen marriage, and that the working-classes have their follies as well as their betters. The parents of John wanted a woman with a few hundred pounds,

to set him up in business; and those of Patty preferred the suit of an ugly, crooked farmer, whose farm-servants they were, and whom they very erroneously considered a gentleman. Now, John had a choice of damsels, upon whom, in consideration of their dowry, his father and mother would willingly have bestowed the parental benediction. They were well to do in the world, and therefore ought not to have been so mercenary, while the Bloomfields, with no means but hard labor, had a large family to bring up, and the marriage of their pretty daughter to their ugly master did hold out advantages that had inclined them to sacrifice one for the good of their other children. In fact, they lived rent free in Mr. Seely's own house; the woman, in consideration of her undertaking for the little crooked bachelor the services of a housekeeper, becoming the lawful possessor of the broken victuals left by that worthy, who, smitten by the charms of Patty Bloomfield, did not exact too rigorous an account of his housekeeping expenses. Now, Patty, *petite* in figure and round faced, had little personal beauty; but her skin was clear, her eyes large, dark, and expressive, besides a foot which would have rendered her a successful candidate for the glass slipper. Our little sempstress, too, was the neatest dresser in the world, carrying the simplicity of her attire almost to prudery; and her peculiar style gave her a gentility of appearance not often seen in persons of her calling. Her accomplishments were few, and confined to a sweet voice, modulated by a fine ear and the art of arranging flowers; and the ladies for whom she worked generally received with their muslin dresses a nosegay arranged in the prettiest manner in the world. Quite conscious of her influence over the mind of the farmer, Patty made free with his prize carnations and choice roses for these occasions, returning his courteous permission by placing on his side-table every Sunday a bouquet arranged in her own faultless style. She read well, had her own way of mental arithmetic, and wrote out her bills in a self-taught hand, till Mr. John Brandon undertook the task of reforming her "pot-hooks and hangers." Their acquaintance had commenced by her making a gown for his mother. She stayed late to finish the garment; he saw her safe to her home in the next parish. Her style of fitting pleased his mother, who saw no danger in thus associating

the young people together, because her son contradicted everything the little woman said, and found fault with everything she did. His cousin, Miss Juliana Maria Tipkins, from London, a ward of Chancery, with a sophisticated face and a thousand pounds, discovered the rudiments of a flirtation; and she was right. His seeming rudeness was Mr. John Brandon's style of courtship. After a time he became so eloquently tender with his eyes, that his mother called him a fool, and Patty Bloomfield a designing jade, and chose another dress-maker. Miss Juliana abused Patty; her cousin defended her; and after two years of courtship, fallings out, and alternative fits of jealousy and tenderness, the whole affair had terminated by a marriage on this lovely June morning, by licence, too, at our parish church.

The circumstances that had compelled Patty to live under the same roof as the ugly, crooked farmer, had led to many ill-natured reflections and surmises, so that her character was roughly handled in those circles where the uneducated usually waste their time in managing their neighbors' matters. Mrs. Brandon and her one maid also made Patty and her agricultural admirer a subject of conversation, and Miss Juliana Maria often put in a few comments, by way of improvement, till John's parents were fully persuaded that to the fault of poverty their future daughter-in-law added those of duplicity and unchastity.

Patty and her bridegroom had found, unexpectedly, in the farmer, an advocate to soften the displeasure of her parents; for to her own home John had conducted her immediately after their marriage, shrewdly suspecting that the farm-laborer and his wife would soon be reconciled to such an eligible match as himself. Nor was he mistaken. Dame Bloomfield remembered that his father was in better circumstances than most of his neighbors; and when her master generously was pleased to overlook the loss of her daughter, she and her Goodman were not very unwilling to receive their tall, handsome son-in-law. After all, the crooked farmer had not a bad heart, nor any want of moral rectitude; the girl had never encouraged him, and she was now nothing more to him than the fair wife of another man; so he invited them both to dinner, and got up a bottle of port to drink their health, kindly telling John to bring his father and mother, with Miss Juliana Maria Tipkins, to dine with them, advising him to tell them at once that he had got married that morning.

Our bridegroom took his advice, and departed. Straightforward, bold, and rather blunt—and, moreover, relying upon his being the sole object of their affections—he entered the little parlor, and after delivering the invitation, added, "you

will find there a bride and bridegroom; so you had better put on your green silk gown, mother, and Juliana her fal-lals and flounces."

"What, then, that girl is married? I am truly glad of it!" replied his mother.

"It was quite time, I think," responded Miss Juliana Maria, very pointedly.

"She is, then, married to the farmer?"

"No, mother, to me."

He was prepared for anger, astonishment, scoldings, and vituperations, but not for the tears, the look of concern, the pathetic-lamentation of his mother, and the melancholy shake of his father's head, accompanied with the grave remark—"son, if she had but been a good girl, I should have considered her as my daughter; but, seeing she is what she is, I will never think her otherwise than as an artful wanton, who has taken in an inconsiderate and disobedient young man."

"Come, father, remember that you are speaking of my wife—a good, virtuous, industrious girl as any in the country. Some of the old ladies who drink tea with mother have talked freely of her, I know, and with no cause so to do. Why, Farmer Seely cares very little about her, after all, for he is going to give us the wedding dinner, which is more than you have even thought about yet."

"If all is true that is said of him and her, a wedding dinner is a cheap way of getting rid of the girl," replied his father, angrily.

"Oh, John, John! you have done the worst day's work you ever did in your life," said his mother, in a tone of deep maternal tenderness. "In course, if she had been worth having, Seely would have been bitterly vexed. Don't tell me of a fellow giving a dinner to a man what's stolen his sweetheart from him! Seely he is by name, but not so silly by nature as to do that, without some good reason for his liberality."

"Now, dear Cousin John, do you think you could have done so?" demanded Miss Juliana Maria, coaxingly.

His start told that the dart had found an aim. His jealous temperament, constancy of affection, and sullen pride repelled the idea of such complaisance with scorn. His mother, too, was not violent; she wept, but she neither screamed with passion, nor abused the woman he had rashly made his wife. He turned pale, then red, and his powerful figure seemed to lose its strength. He sank into a chair, and rested his hot brow upon his trembling hand.

"If you had but consulted your best friends, John, before you were so headstrong as to marry her, you would not have made yourself miserable for life. What had we ever done to deserve such contempt on your part?" His mother rose, put

her arms about his neck—those arms that had carried him in his infancy—and wept like a child.

"Tell me all you know," he said, "dear mother. If I have any cause to doubt, why the matter will stand just as it did yesterday, and Mr. Seely may keep her for me."

Then there was a general outpouring of all the scandal, gossip, and envious surmises, which the conquest of the rich farmer and handsome mechanic had excited in the female part of their community.

"Well, I am rightly served for my disobedience to my good parents," said he; and then added, "Farmer Seely may eat his roast beef and plum pudding with my bride, if he likes, but without either my friends or me. I shall see her no more. I only cared for her while I thought her a good girl." He brushed away a tear, dined with his parents, and went to his own parish church, where he stared everybody out of countenance who ventured to scrutinize him.

The poor slandered bride, how did the day pass with her! For the first two hours, a feeling of tumultuous happiness swelled her breast, and glowed on her clear cheek. Her parents had forgiven her, and she had put on an apron, and made an immense plum pudding—"Sister Patty's grand wedding pudding," as her little brothers called it—and gave her aid in sundry housekeeping matters to her mother; then she set the dinner-table, readjusted her own dress, hoped that the prolonged absence of her husband would be productive of good results; and, finally, went into her chamber, to read the Morning Service, for she was a pious girl, and seldom spent her Sabbath in making plum puddings—but, to be sure, getting married would only happen once in her life. She had said "Monday;" but dear John had said, "the better the day, the better the deed," and she had given way. In the church, too, she had promised a power of things, and, among the rest, to obey him. She was sure he would keep her to her word; but to obey and serve the man she loved would be easy enough, she "fancied."

While the newly-wedded bride was picturing a happy future to herself, time stole on, and no bridegroom, no father and mother-in-law, no Miss Juliana Maria Tipkins appeared. The farmer wanted his dinner, the children cried for the plum pudding; and at last, when all the good things were spoiled, the party sat down to their late and comfortless meal. The bride became miserably anxious, wept, walked up and down the green lane leading from her native village to the post-town where he lived, and passed in tears and restless anxiety her cheerless wedding-day. Her eldest brother went out in

the evening, by her desire, to learn the cause of the bridegroom's unaccountable absence; but all he brought back was, the report that John Brandon had repented of his marriage, and was off to London by that night's coach. Patty dropped on the floor in a swoon, and was carried to bed in a state of insensibility. She kept her room for a week, and when she rejoined the home circle looked as if a deadly blight had fallen on her young blooming years. She went about the house with a step slow and uncertain, ceased to work, and passed her whole time in recalling her happy hours, and contrasted them with her present misery. Few stolen marriages, I know, are happy ones; but her misery had immediately followed her disobedience. To her grief for losing her bridegroom's affections was added the sense of shame. Her fair fame had been slandered; her unhappy marriage was the subject of jest, pity, or contempt. He believed her guilty, too. She could not get over it, and she began to prepare herself for that world whither her breaking heart was fast conducting her. She read and prayed much every day; and employed her hours in writing a sort of journal of her thoughts and feelings, to be given to him when she should be no more. His address had been kept a profound secret, but some busybody had told her mother that he was only waiting for his wife's death to marry Miss Juliana Maria Tipkins, and the poor girl was afraid it was only too true. She was never seen anywhere but at her own parish church; but after this report, she showed signs of consumption, and increasing languor kept her entirely at home.

How did the bridegroom conduct himself while the poor bride was breaking her heart for him? Why, he never mentioned her name, and worked fiercely at his business; but he could not forget her; no other girl attracted his eyes; and as for Miss Juliana Maria Tipkins—poop! he never thought once of her. He was, however, obliged to come home, for his father had hurt his hand, and he was engaged to do some work at the Hall, and his son must supply his place. Now, it happened that John had an aunt and godmother in a village where the stage stopped—a kind, good Christian, whom he valued very much; so he wished to chat with Aunt Mary, and came in just to speak to her, and, among other matters, to ask for some intelligence of his forsaken bride. "I suppose my wife is nearly married again by this time?" said he, in a careless tone, after the first greetings were over.

"Some girls would have married, I believe, after five months' neglect, as such a marriage is not a binding one, I fancy," replied his aunt, gravely; "but I hear she is breaking her heart!"

"That may be her pride, you know," replied

he, and he laughed—that is, he pretended to laugh. "Hearts are tough timbers: mine is not broken, at least."

"You have neither been slandered nor forsaken, John, by the object of your affections," returned his aunt. Then, after a pause, she said—"indeed, John, you have been very cruel to that poor girl, whose mortification and disappointment are bringing her to an early grave."

"Well, ought she not to feel shame for her misconduct? To wrong and take in a fine young fellow like me, for that thing whose head might serve me for a walking-stick—and I loved her so dearly, so fondly, too! But why should we mention the girl's name? The only name she deserves, you know, I must not mention to you."

"I believe Patty Brandon to be a good, a very good, deserving, modest girl, and an injured one, too. Had she been otherwise, after the solemn promises you made before God, you ought not to have perjured yourself by forsaken her in an hour whom you had vowed to cleave unto till death dissolved the covenant. Pray, nephew, did you ever read the marriage ceremony through, till you so rashly plighted, and sinfully, I must say, broke your troth-plight?"

"Why yes, aunt, you may be sure I did, just to see what my wife was to do for me. I am sure she was to love, honor, serve, and obey me. As for what I promised, I am not so clear about that, as I was thinking just then what the old folks would say when I brought home my wife."

The aunt took a small pocket prayer-book from a shelf, opened it, and folding down a leaf, remarked, "that he would have time to consider his matrimonial obligation during ten miles' drive home."

He took it with a smile; a long-vanished feeling of cheerfulness stole into his heart. His aunt thought Patty innocent and injured—and Aunt Mary, too, who was so good, pious, virtuous, and thoroughly respectable herself. "What, then, would you have me do about Patty, aunt?" at length said he.

"Go, ask her pardon, and promise to dismiss all jealous thoughts from your mind, forever, nephew."

"Good-bye, dear Aunt Mary," cried the young mechanic; "I am afraid I shall lose the coach." And he was off like an arrow from a bow.

He was an outside passenger, and the winter was a cold one; yet he read and re-read that beautiful office of the church by which he had bound himself to Martha Bloomfield only to destroy her fame and peace of mind. He thought the journey would never come to an end. One of his father's apprentices came to carry his travelling-bag—a piece of state his mother had imposed upon him, to impress the villagers with

a proper idea of her son's consequence. "Tom, how do you do?" said he. "Are father and mother well?" And then, in an under tone—"I say, have you heard anything lately about my wife?"

"Yes, Master John; I heard that she was thought to be dying last night."

The husband of Patty grew pale; *still* he could not be, for he rushed impetuously into his own house, sat down, and, leaning his arms on the table, wept and sobbed till his tears fell in a shower. It was a terrible sight to see a man weep in that feminine manner; and so his mother thought.

"John, what is the matter—my son, my John?"

"It is all about Patty Bloomfield," whispered the apprentice.

Once—and once only—his mother had seen her son weep, and that was on the day, long years ago, when his little sister had been accidentally drowned; for his temperament was not tearful, but a little sullen, and these bitter drops seemed wrung from his very soul. What anguish is like the anguish of remorse; and what grief is so moving to a woman as that which wrings the heart of her sterner partner, man? Mrs. Brannon felt this, both as a woman and a mother. The agony of her son had touched, too, a jarring chord in her own bosom; the condition of the fine young creature her evil report had occasioned him to forsake, had awakened both regret and sympathy for poor Patty Bloomfield.

"What is the matter with our John, mistress?" asked the old carpenter, who came in and regarded his son's grief with marked anxiety.

The young mechanic raised his head, and replied himself to the question. "The matter is, father, that you have loved and cherished your wife, and I have murdered mine."

"Dear, dear John, you shall bring her home this very night," replied his father, "only pray don't take on so."

"Mother, mother! why did you fill my head with suspicion, and my heart with jealousy?" said the young man to his repentant mother. "You did not ought to have done so, mother?"

"My dear John, I only said what people told me. Pray, forgive me!" And she threw her arms round his neck, and wept bitterly.

"Will she see me?—will she, can she forgive me?—must she die?"—and he disengaged himself from his mother's arms. "Mother, I must go to see her!" and he rushed forth into the street with the speed of a madman.

Patty, supported by pillows, pale and emaciated, the shadow of what she had been, the large, dark eyes surrounded with the deep shade of care, sat listening to the word of God which one of her little sisters was reading to her, when

a man burst into the cottage, and flung himself prostrate on the ground at her feet, crying out, "my wife, my Patty, you are dying, and I am come to die with you." The poor forsaken girl wrapt her arms about him, leant over him with forgiving fondness for a moment, and then sank down lifeless into his arms. Did she really die? No, she did not, as the good-for-nothing fellow really deserved she should; but the long and death-like swoon into which she fell did so nearly resemble death, that everybody but the doctor thought she was gone forever. It was months before Patty was able to take possession of the pretty cottage on the village green, with its porch covered with honeysuckle and roses, which the penitent parents of her repentant husband had taken for her. John made all the furniture in the best style of his own neat workmanship, and the little crooked farmer presented the young couple with a cow and a pig. Aunt Mary, the author of the reconciliation, bestowed her own large family Bible upon them, and on the fly-leaf was written, "Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder." John makes an excellent husband and father, for he thinks he can never make sufficient amendment to his wife for the sufferings he occasioned her by his cruel desertion.

Aunt Mary and the little farmer stood for their lovely boy, born nearly a twelvemonth after their reunion, on which occasion his behaviour was so friendly, that after his departure honest John proclaimed him "to be a good honest fellow."

"So he is," replied his wife, "yet not exactly the sort of a person that a fine young man like you ought to have been jealous of." John grinned; it was the first and last time he ever heard his wife allude to their unhappy separation. "You say nothing about Miss Juliana Maria Tipkins, then, and your bad opinion of my taste?"

Patty did not smile; she knew that the report of his engagement to Miss Juliana had nearly killed her, but she wondered "how she could ever have credited the thing herself."

During her illness John had found and read her letter or journal, and had shed bitter tears over the record of her feelings respecting her abandonment. One sentence alone need be quoted here, and that because it is a just commentary upon stolen marriages in general: "Our minister has convinced me that I was wrong to marry as I did without consulting my best friends, my own parents; and that John was wrong too. He says that neither of us revered the third commandment as we ought to have done. I see it now myself. 'What I have sown, that have I reaped;' yet there are times when 'my punishment seems greater than I can bear.' My days will be short in the land, and then my husband will be free. I pray that like me he may not suffer for his disobedience." How often had John Brandon wept over this simple transcript of his wife's feelings; and his first decided religious impressions took their rise from her convictions. He became a wiser man, and his stolen union with Patty turned out better than such marriages generally do—that is, he and his partner suffered only a few months' misery, instead of the life-long wretchedness that usually follows such hasty adoption of solemn and binding vows.

It is pleasant to witness, however, the domestic happiness of the young couple, now that years of peace have succeeded to those months of misery. The piety of the young wife has softened and subdued the impetuosity of the husband's temper, and when she comes to our parish church with her pretty children, the youngest carried by John, her small, delicate figure, supported by the arm of her tall, powerful partner, I sometimes remember the morning when I saw them plight their faith at the altar in the face of our morning congregation, and the interest we felt in the bride, whose desertion had followed within an hour of her stolen wedding. She was always a favorite of mine; and I can truly say that I sympathized with her sufferings, and rejoiced at the happy termination of the little romance in real life of which she was the lowly heroine.